HISTORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR STATE

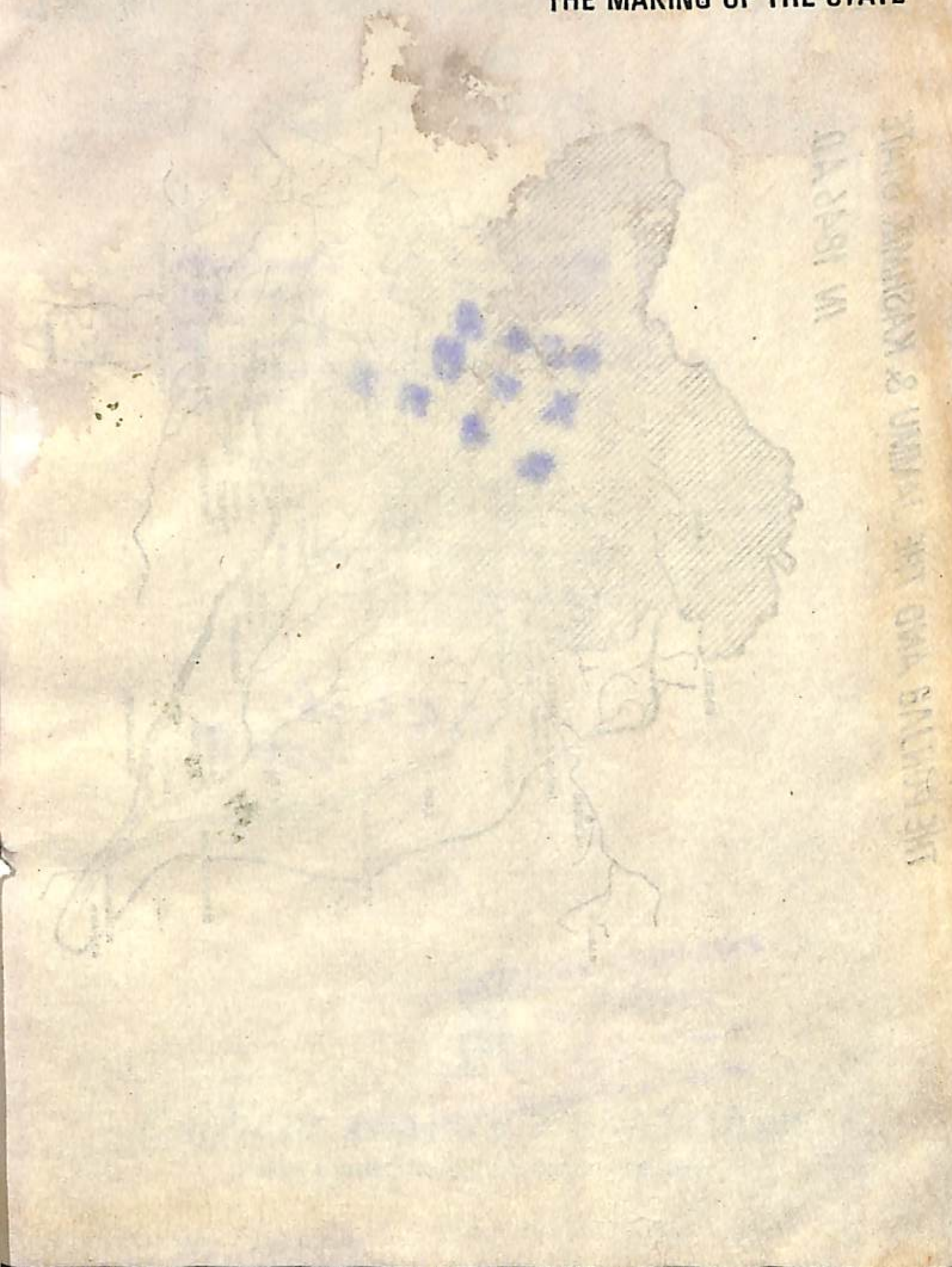
BY

M.L. KAPUR.

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Volume I

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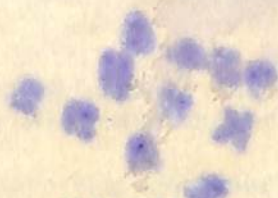
THE PUNJAB AND THE JAMMU & KASHMIR STATE IN 1846 A.D.



HISTORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR STATE

VOLUME I

THE MAKING OF THE STATE



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PREFACE

At present there is no detailed and fully documented history of the modern State of Jammu and Kashmir. The author proposes to fill up this gap by bringing out a series of volumes chroniclising the history from 1846 A.D., when the State was founded, to 1948 A.D.

The first volume is in the hands of the readers. It deals with the circumstances leading to the establishment of the State.

The inspiration to make this ambitious attempt came to the author when he began visiting the National Archives of India, New Delhi, for the collection of material for his Ph. D. thesis. His frequent visits to that great repository from 1966 onwards revealed to him that it contained a lot of material which none had utilized for the writing of an authentic and detailed history of the State. His wonder at the lack of such an attempt increased all the more when his keen interest in the annual Panjab History Conferences took him to Patiala after 1970. The State Archives of Patiala also contained many important and yet unused documents concerning the history of Jammu and Kashmir.

The picture of the early history of the State as it has emerged after using the material obtained from the two repositories as well as other sources, both published and unpublished, is much different from what has already been known. It is necessary to point out here that as the period covered by the present work was marked by revolutionary political changes, many rumours owing to apprehensions and other reasons were spread in the country. The author has taken notice of them only if they affected the course of history. He has also taken liberty to change the spellings of the names of persons and places appearing in the old records to the form used now.

The author wishes to thank all the officials of the National Archives of India, New Delhi, and State Archives of Patiala but for whose help this work would not have seen the light. He also avails of this opportunity to thank his mother, wife and children who had to put up with lot of inconvenience owing to his negligence towards them during the period he was busy in the preparation of this book.

Jammu,
December 22, 1979

M.L. Kapur

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CHAPTER ONE

The Setting

Lying roughly between 32°.10′ and 37°.10′ north latitudes and 72°.30′ and 80°.30′ east longitudes[1], and extending over an area of 2,22,870 kilometres[2], the State of Jammu and Kashmir occupied an exceedingly important position in the political geography of undivided India. It was bounded on the north by the Chinese and the Russian Turkistan, and on the east by Tibet, while on the south and west of it lay the Panjab and the North-West Frontier Province of India respectively. Three greatest empires of the world thus met on its borders.

The central location of the State on the map of Asia, and the passing through it of a number of trade and caravan routes linking Central Asia with Southern Asia since time immemorial were the other factors which had lent it a strategical significance of great value for the neighbouring countres also.

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The State itself was, however, composed of three distinct divisions, culturally and physiographically. These were the two Provinces of Jammu and Kashmir, and the frontier areas of Ladakh and Gilgit.

The frontier areas consisted of high and dry mountains, with many passes[3], and took up nearly three-fourths of the total area of the State. Ladakh alone, "the highest inhabited country in the world", accounted for 97,782 square kilometres. The height of its mountains averaged between 5,000 and 7,000 metres, and Leh, its chief town, itself was situated at 3,522 metres. Enclosed by the Karrakoram mountains on the north, it also enjoyed the distinction of having the second heighest peak in the world—K² (Mt. Godwin Austin, 8,611m). But its north eastern part was covered by some desolate high plains through which passed a number of caravan routes. One of these went north of Leh to Sinkiang in China. It climbed three very high passes—Khardung La (5,602 m) over the Ladakh range, Saser La (5,382 m) over the Karrakoram range, and the Karrakoram Pass (5,575 m) over the Aghil range. Another route passed along the Indus Valley through Leh to Gilgit in the west, and Mansarowar and Kailash in the east.

Quite naturally, the region of Ladakh was swept by extreme cold. But the summer also was very hot owing to the presence of vast tracts of barren rock and sand which reflected "the heat poured down from a seldom clouded sky." The rainfall was scanty, and the snowfall too was seldom heavy. The villages were, consequently, located only where there was a level ground and the possibility of irrigation.

On account of the rocky nature of its mountains, procurement of timber and fuel in Ladakh was a hard row to hoe. The nakedness of land had, in fact, made the very existence of its people quite precarious, and the prevalence of polyandry among them is attributed primarily to this cause. Their religion was the

3. Most important of these being the Burzila Pass (4,816 m) and the Zojila Pass (3,529 m) in the inner Himalayas, and the Mastagh Pass (5,700 m) and the Karrakoram Pass (5,575 m) in the Karrakoram range.

Lamaistic form of Budhism, language, Ladakhi, and chief diet, grim, a kind of barley. Cheerfulness, honesty and willingness to work were their three characteristic qualities.

While Ladakh was watered by the Indus, Gilgit was traversed by a river of the same name. Lying to the south of the Karrakoram range, the latter also, like the former, was barren, with lofty precipitous mountains, narrow rocky gorges, swift glacier-borne torrents, and narrow strips of cultivable land around its villages. Its inhabitants, called Dards, were mostly Muslims by faith. They were a cheery and bold people, but incapable of any sustained labour.

Though the largest of the three divisions of the State in respect of area, yet Ladakh and Gilgit together had the least number of people 1,60,225 in 1891[4] and 3,11,478 in 1941[5].

With an area of 15,120 square kilometres, and population of 9,49,041 in 1891[6] and 17,28,705 in 1941[7], Kashmir also was enclosed by high mountains. While to its east stood the hoary-headed Harmukh (5,150 m), further south was Mahadev and the lofty ranges of Gwasha Brari (5,425 m), on the south-west were the Pir Panjal ranges with peaks 4,500 metres high, and to the north were ranges and ranges of the Karrakorams and the Himalayas, dominated by Nanga Parbat (7,980 m). But Kashmir Valley proper had an average elevation of 1,800 metres only. It was nearly flat, with an oval shape, and approximately 134 kilometres in length, and 32 to 40 kilometres in breadth. Its temperate climate, fertile soil, natural streams, productive lakes, navigable rivers, rich forests, abundant fruits, and numerous arts and crafts—all went to make it a beautiful land beyond all words, a paradise on earth. Srinagar was its premier city and also the summer capital of the State. The Jehlum, old Vitasta, which passed through it, has charmed many people to call Srinagar "the Venice

4. Census Report of India, 1941, vol. XXII, p. 82.
   The first Census in the State was carried out in this year.
5. Census Report of India, 1941, vol. XXII, p. 82.
6. Census Report of India, 1941, vol. XXII, p. 81.
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The inhabitants of Kashmir were overwhelmingly Muslim, and all of them spoke Koshur or Kashmiri. Their occupation was agriculture, although they have been known all over the world since ages for their arts and crafts. Rice was their staple diet. About the character of Kashmiris, it is said ; they "are a bundle of contradictions ; vociferous, yet timid to the extent of crying in helplessness, loath to hurt yet very abusive, master-artists yet lacking art sense, lowly yet intellectual and mystical, shrewed yet businesslike and persistent, emotional and ruled by sentiment, gossipy and prone to listen to rumours, polite on the face yet abusive and rumour-mongers behind your back. With all such positive and negative elements in Kashmiri character, the Kashmiris can be singled out as extremely warm, friendly and hospitable"[8].

Kashmir was separated from the Jammu Province by the Pir Panjal range[9] which was crossed by all the important trade routes between the former and the Panjab. On the south, the boundary of Jammu ran all along the line of the Panjab Districts of Gurdaspur, Sialkot, Gujrat and Jehlum. With the exception of a fringe of level land along this border, Jammu also was a hilly territory, gradually rising and reaching the high uplands bounded by the mountains of the Himalayan range.

The altitude of its hills varied from 300 to 1,200 metres. Jammu may, therefore, be called a buffer area between the enchanting Vale of Kashmir and the hot plains of the Panjab.

Although watered by the three great rivers of Ravi, Chenab and Jehlum, yet cultivation in this region was precarious partly because of its stony soil and partly owing to the vagaries of rainfall. There was no industry worth the name either. But the Province was rich in minerals like coal, iron, bauxite, copper, zinc and lead, and precious stones.

8. Dhar, Somnath, op. cit., p. 13.
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With an area of 26,089 square kilometres, Jammu had a population of 14,34,686 in 1891[10] and 19,81,433 in 1941[11], which consisted mostly of the Hindus. More than nine-tenths of the Hindu population of the whole State, in fact, lived in this Province. Known as Dogras, the people were manly, simple and honest in their disposition. They were also very particular about their honour, and enjoyed the reputation of being among "the best fighting material to be found in the country". Naturally, service in the army was their first love.

It need hardly be mentioned that the division derived its name from its chief city of Jammu. Popurlarly known as the city of temples, it was situated on one of the spurs of a rugged hill (300 metres high) overlooking the plains and a small river, the Tawi. Not only was it the winter capital of the State, but also an important market of exchange for the plain and hill commodities on account of its location. Udhampur and Kathua were the other big towns in this region.

Communication between all the three divisions and within each one of them also was very difficult. While the frontier areas and Kashmir were, as already said, mostly mountainous, the Jammu Province abounded in streams and rivulets which, in the absence of bridges, were rendered unfordable in the rainy season. The presence of forests everywhere made further difficult the task of linking various places by roads. No wonder, the first tarred road fit for wheeled traffic between Kashmir and the Panjab was built as late as 1889, that between Kashmir and Gilgit in 1893, while Kashmir and Jammu were linked by a through road only in 1922.

Yet another significant point to take note of is that all these divisions were politically independent of each other before 1846 A.D. An outline of their early history also would, therefore, be quite appropriate here.

Squeezed between India, Kashmir, Baltistan and Tibet, Ladakh originally formed one of the provinces of the last named

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On the whole, however, with its sparce population and strong neighbours, Ladakh was more often the victim of aggression than an aggressor itself. In the time of Aurangzeb (1658-1707), the Mughal emperor of India, it was invaded by Kalmak Tartars. The ruler of Ladakh then fled to seek assistance from Ibrahim Khan, the Mughal Governor of Kashmir. Help was no doubt promised but only if he renounced his religion of Budhism, embraced Islam, and paid tribute. This being the Hobson's choice, the Ladakhi chief agreed, and later reoccupied his kingdom under the name of Iqbal Mahmud. Thus was Ladakh made a tributary to the Mughals, although the son and successor of Iqbal Mahmud reverted to his original faith. From 1752 onwards, when the Afghans conquered Kashmir, the Ladakhis began to pay tribute to them[14].

The people of Gilgit also, like the Ladakhis, were a martyre to the predatory raids of their more powerful neighbours, the Chitralis. The latter often carried them away in large numbers to be sold as slaves in Turkistan[15].

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In the beginning of the seventh century A.D. Kashmir came to be ruled by the Karkota dynasty which gave it a number of illustrious kings. Hieun Tsang, the well known Chinese pilgrim, visited Kashmir in the time of Durlabhavardhana (625-61), the founder of this dynasty. Chandrapida (711-19) was another outstanding Karkota ruler. In view of the expanding power of the Arabs in Central Asia, he thought of entering into a military alliance with the Chinese. Although his efforts came to a naught, yet the Chinese emperor, Hsuan Tsung (712-56), honoured him with the title of Raja. The greatest of the Karkotas was, however, Lalitaditya Muktapida (724-61), and the country reached the pinnacle of glory under him. Not only did he extend his kingdom far and wide, but also gave it a sound system of administration. He was a magnificient builder too and the far famed temple of Martand stands as a living memorial of his greatness.

Avantivarman (855-83), who founded the Utpala dynasty, is equally remembered for his constructive works and piping times of peace. It was his able engineer, Suyya, who for the first time in the history of Kashmir saved the country from the recurring menace of annual floods by draining the waters of the Jehlum near Baramulla. But his successor, Samkaravarman (883-902) proved to be a great oppressor of the people. It is to him that the origin of the system of forced labour in Kashmir is attributed. He was, however, a great conqueror.

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Two women also occupied the throne of Kashmir in ancient times. They were Sugandha (902-04) and Didda (980-1003). The

latter was a remarkable woman in many ways. She dominated the political scene of Kashmir practically for about half a century, first as the chief queen of king Ksemagupta, then as the regent of her son, Abhimanyu, and three grand-sons, and finally as an independent ruler. After her death, the country was governed for about three centuries by the two Lohara dynasties. Their period is characterised by petty politics, court intrigues, treachery, debauchery and murder. Kalasa (1063-89) and Harsa (1089-1101) even plundered and demolished some temples. "In the form of Harsa" says Kalhan, "some demon had descended to the earth to destroy this land hallowed by gods, Tirthas and Risis[16]."

Islam entered Kashmir about this time, and earned quite a number of followers by the time the thirteenth century grew old. Soon after Suhadeva (1301-20) ascended the throne, there came to Kashmir two refugees, viz., Rinchana, a Budhist, and Shah Mir, a Muslim. Subsequently, both of them became kings. Rinchana (1320-23) implored the Hindus to admit him into their fold, but their conservatism would not brook any violation. Ultimately, he embraced Islam, and thus became the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir. After his death, however, the country reverted to the Hindu rule but only temporarily. In 1339, Shah Mir seized power, and with him commenced an unbroken Muslim rule in Kashmir. Some of his descendants proved to be great conquerors. Shihab-ud-Din (1354—73), for instance, reached the slopes of the Hindukush. A number of social reforms also were carried out by them. Ala-ud-Din (1343—54) promulgated a law that an unchaste childless widow was not entitled to any share in her husband's property. Sikandar (1389—1413) banned gambling, drinking of wine, dancing of women and the practice of Sati among the Hindus. In matters of religion also, Shah Mir and most of his successors were perfectly tolerant, and made no distinction between their Hindu and Muslim subjects. Qutb-ud-Din (1373—89) even used to offer prayers at the Hindu temples. But Sikandar turned out to be the Aurengzeb of Kashmir, and perpetrated untold miseries on the Hindus. It is from his time that the predominance of Muslims in the local population dates. Sayyid Ali Hamadani,

16. Kalhan, *Rajatarangini*, trans. M.A. Stein, 1961, vil, 1243.

Mir Muhammad Hamadani and some other Sufis also largely contributed towards the spread of Islam in Kashmir. Sikandar's son, Zain-ul-Abidin (1420–70), however, reverted to the traditional religious policy of his land, and his rule was "like the cooling sandal paste after the heat of summer in a desert had departed".[17] The country made such a splendid progress under his benevolent rule as it had never seen before. Many of the famous arts and crafts of Kashmir, in fact, owe their origin to him.

Zain-ul-Abidin was succeeded by a line of weak and worthless rulers, and the country again came in for a lot of troubles. In 1540, Mirza Haidar Dughlat, a general of Humayun, occupied it for full eleven years. The frequent and rapid changes in succession during the past some years had caused the power of the nobles to scale up so much that in 1561 one of them, Ghazi Chak, deposed Habib Shah in the open court, and placed the crown upon his own head. But his Chak dynasty also was supplanted by Akbar in 1586. Kashmir then came to form a part of the Mughal Empire of India. The Mughals were, by and large, generous, and Kashmir gained much under their benign rule. Jahangir and Shah Jahan took special interest in laying a number of beautiful gardens in the Valley. But the people again fell on evil days when Kashmir was conquered by the Afghans in 1752. The Afghans also were, however, pushed out by the Sikhs in 1819, and we shall later have an occasion to describe this event in some detail.

Unlike Kashmir, the early history of Jammu is still folded in mist. A local tradition states that the city of Jammu was founded in the dim past, over three thousand years ago, by Jambu Lochan, brother of Bahu Lochan who had sometime before laid the foundation of Bahu on the left bank of the Tawi.[18] But the legends seldom stand historical scrutiny.

According to *Tarikh-i-Azmi* of Kashmir (1417), Jammu came into existence around 900 A.D. It is also about this time that our eye meets the earliest reference to Durgara Desha (from which,

17. Srivara, *Jaina-Rajatarangini*, trans. Dutt, p. 100

18. Hutchison, J and Vogel, J. Ph, History of Jammu State, in *Panjab Historical Society Journal*, vol. III, 1916, pp. 105-07.

obviously, the terms Duggar and Dogra are derived) in two inscriptions on copper plates of the eleventh century. These plates speak of a grand victory of Sahila Verman of Chamba (910—30) over the combined forces of *Kiras* and the Lord of Durgara.[19] There is also a stray reference to Bahusthala in Kalhana's *Rajatrangini*, but its identity with our Bahu has yet to be established.

The first contemporary and authentic reference to Jammu is found in the memoirs of Timur who sacked this town in the course of his Indian invasion (1398—99). His account goes to show that Jammu had then emerged as the focal point of the local power. Described as the "warlike *gabrs* and athletic Hindus", its inhabitants, says the invader, were "not submissive and obedient to the Sultans of Hindustan." But they were defeated by Timur, and their ruler was coerced to embrace Islam[21].

Named Mal Dev by Dewan Kirpa Ram, the author of *Gulabnama*,[22] this ruler seems to have been the first Muslim convert in Jammu, and the event of his conversion should have led to far reaching consequences. But unfortunately we are in abysmal ignorance of what followed it. There is, however, a reference in the above mentioned *Tarikh-i-Azmi* to the effect that the ruler of Jammu gave his daughter in marriage to Ali Shah who ruled over Kashmir from 1413 to 1420.[23]

The coronation of Mal Dev, again according to a local tradition, was performed over a huge stone which he himself had brought from the Tawi, and installed at a spot now located in the Mohalla of Kalijani.[24] His immediate successor was Bhim Dev.

19. Ibid., pp. 107-09.
21. *Malfuzat-i-Timuri* in Elliot and Dowson's *History of India*, III, pp. 467-72 ; see also *Zafarnama* in Elliot and Dowson, III, pp. 517-20.
22. Kirpa Ram, Dewan, *Gulabnama*, trans. S.S. Charak, 1977, pp. 19-20.
23. Hutchison and Vogel, op. cit., p. 116 ; see also Abdul Qadir Badayuni, *Muntakhab-ut-Twarikh*, *I*, p. 289 : Nizam-ud-Din, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, I, p. 300 ; Firishta, *Tarikh-i-Firishta*, I, p. 167, II, p. 342 ; Yahya Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, pp. 190-92.
24. Smyth, G.C., *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore, with some account of the Jummoo Rajahs, the Seik Soldiers and their Sirdars*, Rep. 1970, pp. 234-35.

The latter rendered valuable service to Sultan Mubarak Shah of Delhi (1421-34) against Jasrat Khokhar of the Punjab. This naturally incurred Bhim Dev the wrath of the Khokhar. Jasrat, therefore, advanced upon Jammu, and defeated and killed its ruler in a battle in April 1423.[25]

It seems the enmity between the Khokhars and the rulers of Jammu had originated at quite an early time, for as far back as the seventies of the twelfth century also, the Khokhars had formed an alliance with Khusru Malik, the last Ghaznavid ruler of the Panjab, against Chakar Dev of Jammu. To counteract this, the ruler of Jammu had allied himself with Mohammad Ghori, and invited him to invade the Panjab. The result was three invasions by the Ghori in 1178, 1184 and 118626.

Jammu thus remained occupied in warfare with the rulers of the Panjab for a long time. After Kapur Dev (1530—71), a flame of discord raged in the ruling house of Jammu itself. His two sons, Jay Dev and Samil Dev, fell out with each other, and set up their independent authority at Bahu and Jammu respectively. This facilitated the task of Akbar to establish his firm hold over the whole territory. But the crowns of Jammu and Bahu were again united in the time of Hari Dev (1652-88). The animosity between the two houses, however, continued for many more years, and each several times raided the territory of the other with a vengeance[27]. Hari Dev died in the Deccan while leading a Mughal expedition[28].

In the time of Dhruv Dev (1703—42), the people of Bahu raided Jammu for no less than seven times, reduced it to "a desolate heap of smoking ruins and ashes", and "it was mostly for this reason that Jammu was so thinly inhabited before the time of Ranjeet Dehu (Dev) and that his father and his predecessors

25. Nizam-ud-Din, op. cit., I, p. 305 ; Firishta, op. cit. I, 164 ; *Sarhindi, Yahya, op. cit., p. 198* ; *Kirpa Ram, op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.
26. Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, II, p. 281.
27. Symth, G.C., op. cit., p. 241.
28. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 25 ; Bute Shah, Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din, *Tarikh-i-Panjab*, V, 1848, f. 545 ; *Richmond's Memorandum on Jammu Rajas*, 1843, PRO London No. 30, 12/60, 4277, f. 3.

considered temporary huts the fittest for their own residence and that of their people."[29]

Ranjit Dev's rule certainly forms a golden chapter in the history of Jammu. But it was also in his time that the enmity between the people of Jammu and the Sikhs of the Panjab germinated, culminating in the conquest of Jammu by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. After Jammu, the Maharaja conquered, as already mentioned, Kashmir also. As all these events have a great bearing on the formation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, we propose to begin our main work from the next chapter with their study in some detail.

29. Smyth, G.C., op. cit., p. 242.

CHAPTER TWO

Conquest of Jammu and Kashmir by Ranjit Singh

Ranjit Dev succeeded to the throne of Jammu in about 1742[1] and, within a short time, extended his territory far and wide. Once or twice he attacked even Sialkot, and over-ran the country on both sides of the Chenab as far as Gujrat. His followers gradually became so bold that they began to plunder the caravans passing between the Panjab and Kashmir, and the communication between these territories was practically put to an end[2]. The Panjab was then a part of the Mughal empire of India, and ruled by a governor. The intrepiditv of the Jammu ruler at last compelled him to lead a punitive expedition against former.

1. The exact time of Ranjit Dev's accession is as yet controversial. As given by various scholars, it varies between 1719 and 1742. The dates of some other events of his region are also uncertain.
2. Smyth, G.C., op. cit., pp. 242-43 ; Suri, Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, I, p. 106 ; Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and Afghans*, Rep. 1970, pp. 80-81.

To the good luck of the governor, the house of Ranjit Dev was divided at this time. Besides the latter, Dhruv Dev had left three other sons—Ghansar Dev, Surat Singh and Balwant Singh. The right of Ranjit Dev to the throne was contested by Ghansar Dev on the ground that he was senior to him by one hour, having been born by another wife of Dhruv Dev. The Mughal governor supported the claim of Ghansar Dev, marched upon Jammu in 1748, and easily defeated Ranjit Dev. Ghansar Dev was then seated on the throne, and Ranjit Dev brought to Lahore to be kept as a prisoner. In 1760, however, the latter secured his release on the intercession of some well-wishers, and returned to Jammu to reoccupy his kingdom[3].

Every student of Indian history knows that the Mughal empire of India was at this time tottering. Civil wars, revolts of governors, victories of the Marathas, and rebellions of the Jats and the Rohillas had left but the semblance of power at Delhi. Nadir Shah struck a further blow in 1739. He was followed by Ahmad Shah Abdali, and, far about twenty years from 1747 to 1765, the Panjab reeled under his repeated invasions. In 1753, he even cut off a big slice of the Panjab from Delhi, and put it under his won governor.

Ranjit Dev was quick to improve the occasion afforded by these conditions not only for the consolidation but also for the expansion of his power. It is said that there were twenty-two small Dogra principalities, eleven in the Jullundur circle and eleven in the Duggar circle ; and Ranjit Dev brought under his control most of the Duggar states which included Chamba, Balawar or Basohli, Bhadu, Mankot or Ramkot, Bandraltha or Ramnagar, Jasrota, Jammu, Bhuti, Chineni, Kishtwar and Bhadarwah. By 1773, his authority extended over the entire country from Jasrota to Kaluwal on the Chenab and from Roras to Mandikail in Gurdaspur[4]. The rulers of Bhimbar, Rajouri and Poonch also

3. Richmond's Memorandum, ff. 4-5 ; Bute Shah, op. cit., II, f. 546 ; Smyth, G.C., op. cit., p. 243.

4 Binglay, A.H., *Dogras*, 1899, p. 14 ; Shahmat Ali, op. cit., pp. 80-81 ; Bute Shah, op. cit., I, f, 44, II, ff. 545-46 ; Drew, Frederick, the *Jammu and Kashmir Territories*, Rep. 1971, p. 9.

were in constant attendance at his court.[5]

It is reasonable to expect that Ranjit Dev should not have achieved so much political surpremacy without the support of Ahmad Shah Abdali. The latter was, in fact, so happy with him that he bestowed upon him the title of *Raja Rajgan.*[6] In 1762, Ranjit Dev rendered him a very valuable service in punishing his refractory governor of Kashmir, Sukh Jiwan.[7]

More important than the political supremacy was, however, the commercial prosperity that Jammu achieved under Ranjit Dev. We have so far no means at our disposal to ascertain the economic condition of the people of this area before his rise. Even the long account of Timur tells us only about the fringe of level land along the Panjab border, which, he says, was well cultivated. But in view of the stony nature of its soil and scarcity of water supply, it should not be difficult for us to comprehend that agriculture was a blind alley occupation for most of the inhabitants of Jammu. Little wonder, when Timur's men plundered the town of Jammu and a nearby village of Manu, their booty consisted only of "grain, goods of all kinds and cattle". Nowhere in the invader's account do we come across any hint that he got from these places any precious metal also. Obviously, the people were not rich to that extent. But Ranjit Dev turned Jammu into "one of the richest towns of India."[8]

Rightly perceiving that to make agriculture paying was nothing short of squaring the circle, he encouraged trade and commerce. The evolution of events also helped him. As already observed, the Panjab was then passing through unsettled times. This rendered the trade routes passing through its plains unsafe. The traders and travellers going from the Panjab to

5. Richmond's Memorandum, ff. 5-6 ; Kirpa Ram, op. cit., 38-43.

6. Richmond's Memorandum, f. 5 ; Bute Shah, op. cit., II, f. 546.

7. Hutchison and Vogel, op. cit., p. 122 ; Prinsep, H.T, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Panjab*, Rep. 1970, pp. 20-21.

8. Hugel, Baron Charles, *Travels in Kashmir and the Panjab*, Rep. 1970, p. 274.

Kashmir, therefore, abandoned their old route through Bhimbar, and took to the new one which entered the outer hills near Nahan, passed through Bilaspur, Nadaun, Haripur (Guler), Nurpur and Basohli, and from there to Jammu and thence to Kashmir. "Dar-ul-Aman", or "Abode of Peace", as Jammu had then become,[9] it further lured many wealthy traders to adopt it as their permanent place of residence. As Ranjit Dev extended them every help and protection,[10] within no time Jammu emerged as an important entrepot of the region. At one time or the other, a number of political refugees also, including Malika Zamani, the wife of the Mughal emperor Mohammed Shah (1719-48), Mughlani Begam, the widow of Mir Mannu, who had succeeded Zakaria Khan as the Mughal governor of the Panjab, the family of Raja Kaura Mall, and that of Charat Singh, the grandfather of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, felt drawn to it.[11] "We must go to Jammu", had said Mughlani Begam, "I do not see any place as safe as" this one.[12]

One who had so liberally treated the outsiders could not have overlooked the need to work for ending the old animosity among his own people. Ranjit Dev, in fact, did everything to achieve this goal. He encouraged the residents of Bahu to settle down in Jammu, and thus live side by side with the local people. Many of them were even provided with free grants of land.[13]

Yet another feather in his cap was a liberal religious policy. He is rather said to have been partial to his Muslim subjects to the annoyance of the Hindus. In a locality which came to be called as the Mughalpura, not only were the former granted free land, but Ranjit Dev also built there a mosque at his own expense.[14] While

9. Sinha, N.K., *Rise of the Sikh power*, 1960, p. 113.
10. Hugel, Baron Charles, op. cit., p. 274; Smyth, G.C, op. cit, p. 241; Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 29-30.
11. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., I, pp. 159, 164; Bute Shah, op. cit., I, ff. 44-45; Tota, Raja Ram, *Gulgashkat-i-Panjab*, f, 265; Smyth, G.C., op. cit., p. 9; Prinsep, H.T., op. cit., p. 173.
12. *Tahmas Nama*, trans. P. Setu Madhava Rao, 1967, p. 74.
13. Smyth, G.C, op. cit., p. 246.
14. Forster, George, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, I, Rep. 1970, pp. 283-84.

passing by the side of any mosque, if he heard the call to a prayer, he would immediately dismount his horse, pay his respects by bowing, and then resume his march.[15]

Besides the above mentioned buildings, many others also owe their existence in Jammu to him. Before him, the town had not even one house made of bricks or stones[16] ; there were only thatched huts called *chunns* which differed but little from the *chuggees* of the villages.[17] Ranjit Dev built a large palace on the foundations laid by his father.[18] The latter had also started the construction of the Bahu fort. It was now completed by his son.[19] Yet another notable foundation of Ranjit Dev was a separate *Mandi*, or Court of Justice, which later came to be known as the *Kull Mandi*, or the Lower Court.[20]

As a result of the wise policy and benevolent administration of Ranjit Dev, the population of Jammu increased to 1,50,000, and its area to about five and a half kilometres in circumference.[21] Hardly was there any kind of goods which could not be procured here.[22]

Jammu was thus lifted to the apex of fame by Ranjit Dev.

But signs of decay also appeared in his time, and the rising prosperity of the people of Jammu soon proved a curse for them. It so happened that after Ahmad Shah Abdali's death in 1773, the Afghans found it almost impossible to maintain their authority in the Panjab. The Mughal hold over it had already loosened. Under these circumstances, the Sikhs became the virtual masters of the Panjab. They were, however, divided into a number of confederacies known as *Misls*. Further, each one of them tried to be supreme. Like some other areas of the northern Panjab, Jammu also, on

15. Bute Shah, op. cit., I, pp. 44-45.
16. Smyth, G.C, op. cit., p. 243.
17. Ibid., p. 241.
18. Ibid., p. 246.
19. Ibid., p. 242.
20. Ibid., p. 246.
21. Ibid., p. 241 ; see also Richmond's Memorandum, f. 7.
22. Bute Shah, op. cit., I, f, 44.

various occasions, fell a victim to their consequential mutual rivalries which, in its case, were accentuated by their greedy nature.

The Bhangi Misl was the first to cast its eyes on Jammu. Three of its leaders, Gujjar Singh, Bhamma Singh and Hari Singh, raided Jammu in 1756, 1761 and 1762 respectively.[23] Hari Singh came at the head of 12,000 cavalry and, after exacting tribute from Ranjit Dev, tried to seize the Kashmir Valley also, but failed.[24]

Next it was the turn of the Sukerchakias. They were emboldened when dissensions broke out in Ranjit Dev's own house in the evening of his life. He had two sons, Brijraj Dev and Dulel Singh. On account of his unworthy conduct, however, the former and the elder son fell from his father's good graces, and was sent away to look after the fort of Jaganu.[25] In 1774, Ranjit Dev set aside his claim to the throne, and nominated Dulel Singh as the heir-apparent. Brijraj was, however, not the man to take this lying down. He immediately applied for assistance to Charat Singh, head of the Sukerchakia Misl. The latter fortified himself by an alliance with Jai Singh and Hakikat Singh of the Kanhaya Misl, and marched upon Jammu. Ranjit Dev also called to his help the rulers of Chamba, Nurpur and Kangra, and Jhanda Singh Bhangi, the great rival of the Sukerchakias. The two armies then met at the Basantar river. In one the engagements which followed, Charat Singh was killed by the bursting of his own gun. But the next day, Jhanda Singh also was treacherously done to death. The followers of the three Sikh Misls then retired to their respective territories.[26] But before leaving, Jai Singh and Hakikat Singh

23. Hutchison and Vogel, op. cit., p. 125.
24. Latif, S.M. *History of the Panjab*, 1964, p. 297 ; Sinha, N.K, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, 1960, p. 57.
25. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 44 ; Ali-ud-Din, *Ibratnama*, p. 386. The latter source says that Brijraj was sent to Manawar.
26. Hugel, Baron Charles, op. cit., pp. 358-59 ; Prinsep, H.T, op. cit., pp. 30-31 ; Payne, C.H, *A short History of the Sikhs* Rep. 1970, pp. 66-67 ; Lawrence, H.M.L., *Adventures of an Officer in the Panjab*, I, Rep. 1970, pp. 245-46 ; Bingley, A.H, op. cit., pp. 14-15 ; Latif, S.M, op. cit., pp. 339-40.

exacted a huge tribute of rupees one lakh and twenty-five thousand from Ranjit Dev.[27]

It was, however, after the death of this famed ruler in about 1780 that Jammu suffered most and lost all of its former glory. He was succeeded by Brijraj Dev to whom he had been reconciled sometime before he ended his days. Brijraj immediately resolved to get rid of his old brother rival, Dulel Singh, and got the work accomplished by one of his cousins, Mian Mota. An attempt on the life of Dulel Singh's son, Ajit Singh, also was planned. But he managed to save his bacon, and fled to seek protection of the Sikhs, most probably the Bhangis.[28]

Either sometime before[29] or soon after Brijraj's accession[30] Mahan Singh, son of late Charat Singh, is said to have exchanged his turban with him. But now, finding Jammu in a distracted state, Mahan Singh coveniently dismissed from his mind all the promises by which he had bound himself to an abiding brotherhood with Brijraj Dev, and burnt his territory in the winter of 1781. The latter was then down with an epidemic fever. His flesh was, therefore, not strong, nor was his spirit willing. Hence, he made an abject submission, and agreed to pay tribute[31].

Having discovered the helplesssness of the Jammu ruler, the Bhangis also began to make constant raids on his borders[32]. To meet the situation, Brijraj made an agonizing appeal for help to the Kanhaya Sikhs. There was an answering response, and Jai Singh and Hakikat Singh did come, but only to join the Bhangis

27. Smyth, G.C, op. cit., p. 247 ; Shahamat Ali, op. cit., pp. 84-85 ; Ali-ud-Din, op. cit, pp. 46-47. The last referred to source, however, states that this event took place in 1771-72.
28. Forster, George, op. cit., I, p. 286 ; Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 45.
29. Hugel, Baron Charles, op. cit., p. 359 ; Hutchison and Vogel, op. cit., p. 126 ; Prinsep, H.T., op. cit., p.31.
30. Smyth, G.C., op. cit., p. 247 : Shahmat Ali, op. cit., p. 86 ; Bingley, A.H., op. cit., p. 15.
31. Smyth, G.C., op. cit., p. 247 ; Hugel, Baron Charles, op. cit., p. 70 : Bingley, A.H. op. cit., p. 15.
32. Forster, George, op. cit., pp. 286-87 ; Bingley, A.H, op. cit., p. 15 ; Hutchison and Vogel, op. cit., p. 127.

in plundering him[33]. Driven to bay, Brijraj turned to Mahan Singh. The latter also atonce showed his wilingness to take up cudgels against his hereditary foes, marched with all the troops he could muster[34], and "firmly established his authority" at Jammu in 1783[35].

The combination of the Bhangis and the Kanhayas, however, proved too formidable for Mahan Singh and Brijraj to withstand. The latter were, therefore, put to rout, and Brijraj was required to pay an annual tribute of rupees thirty thousand to Hakikat Singh[36].

Jammu had now definitely fallen on evil days. It was thickly involved in the mutual rivalries of the various Sikh Misls. The need of the hour was a strong and tactful ruler. But Brijraj woefully lacked these qualities, and proved to be not only incompetent but also oppressive. To meet the expenses of the protracted war against his adversaries, he levied a general contribution on the people of Jammu. This unwise step forced many wealthy merchants—the very people who had brought prosperity and glory to Jammu—to quit the city[37]. What Ranjit Dev had done after years of hard labour was thus now being undone by his unworthy successor.

In 1784-85, Jammu was again invaded, and this time by Mahan Singh. Originally, Hakikat Singh wanted to lead the expedition, but invited Mahan Singh also to join him. The latter came at a gallop, and encamped near Jammu even before the Kanhaya chief was anywhere near it. Talks for a settlement were then held through an emissary of Mahan Singh and Mian Mota on behalf of Brijraj. As a result, the Sukerchakia Sardar agreed to withdraw if the ruler of Jammu paid him personal homage. But the latter refused to place any trust in the invader. Nor had he any courage to fight against his foe, for his baneful fiscal policy had cost him the support of the powerful local trading community.

33. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, 1963, I, p. 183.
34. Hutchison, and Vogel, op. cit., p. 127; Payne, C.H, op. cit., p. 68; Latif, S.M, op. cit., p. 342.
35. Forster, George, op. cit., I, p. 287.
36. Hutchison and Vogel, op. cit., p. 127; Payne, C.H, op. cit., p. 68.
37. Forster, George, op. cit., p. 268.

Jwalla Dass, one of the leading merchants of Jammu, especially went to tell Mahan Singh that Brijraj was unfit to rule. In these circumstances, the ruler of Jammu considered discretion the better part of valour, and made himself scarce in the Trikuta mountains, about 43 kilometres from Jammu. A number of prominent citizens of Jammu then waited upon the invader, offered him large presents, and begged forgiveness, but to no purpose[38].

"The city of Amritsar", says one historian, "had not then attained an equally flourishing condition with that of Jammu ; and its wealth, and a jealousy of its rising prosperity, had long been viewed with jealousy by the Sikhs". Mahan Singh, therefore, ordered his troops to plunder Jammu. This having been done to the heart's content, the town was set ablaze[39]. Many men and women were made prisoner[40], and the booty of the Sikh chief exceeded two crores of rupees[41]. "With the loot of Jammu", says Khushwant Singh, "Maha Singh raised the Sukerchakias from a position of of comparative obscurity to that of being one of the leaders of the misl confederacy[42]".

About two years later, in 1787, Brijraj suffered baptism of blood at the hands of the Bhangis. When the latter invaded his kingdom, he left Jammu to give them a battle at Rumal, near Chaprar. Before Ranjit Dev had closed his eyes, he had counselled his son, first, always to abide by the advice of his loyal officials ; secondly, to pay regularly his tribute to the Bhangis ; and, thirdly, never to fight any battle outside Jammu[43]. But Brijraj flung these

38. Ali-ud-Din, op. cit., pp. 386-87 ; Hugel, Charles Baron, op. cit., p. 360 ; Payne, C.H., op. cit., p. 68 ; Prinsep, H.T, op. cit., p. 34 ; Hutchison and Vogel, op. cit., pp. 127-28 ; Latif, S.M, op. cit., pp. 342-43.
39. Shahmat Ali, op. cit., p. 86 ; Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., II pp. 24-25 ; Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 46 ; Hugel, Charles Baron, op. cit., p. 273 ; Latif, S.M. op. cit., p. 343.
40. Ali-ud-Din, op. cit., p. 387.
41. Hutchison and Vogel, op. cit., p. 128. One crore is equal to one hundred millions.
42. Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, 1962, p. 22 ; see also Suri, Sohan lal, op. cit., II, p. 21 ; Latif, S.M, op. cit., pp. 310-11, 343.
43. Ali-ud-Din, op. cit., p. 386.

counsels to the winds, and came to grief[44]. Alas ! advice when most needed is least heeded.

Brijraj Dev was succeeded by his only and one year old son, Sampuran Dev. When he also died in 1797, his cousin brother, Ajit Singh, son of Dulel Singh, was placed on the throne. It was during the reign of the latter that the Sikhs again thought of Jammu, but to conquer and not to plunder it.

This significant change in the attitude of the Sikhs occurred under the leadership of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He was the son of Mahan Singh. When he succeeded his father in 1972, the Panjab was again in danger of being occupied by her neighbours, piece by piece. The Marathas, who did not take long to recover from their disaster at Panipat in 1761, and held Delhi from 1773 to 1803, made a couple of attempts to grab the fertile plains of the Panjab also in the name of the Mughal Emperor ; Zaman Shah of Kabul thrice ventured between 1793 and 1798 to recover the territory earlier conquered by his grandfather, Ahmad Shah Abdali ; and when the British had seated themselves at Delhi, they too began to cast their covetous eyes on the petty states of the Panjab. The only way to save the country was to bring its warring *Misls* under one effective governism ; and this was cleverly accomplished by Ranjit Singh during the first ten years of his career. Then he entered upon a career of conquests, and, by 1808, became an unquestioned master of the central Panjab. Next, he cherished a desire of bringing the Cis-Sutlej Sikh States under his control. But in this direction, he received a check at the hands of the British. In 1809, the latter forced him to sign a treaty of friendship vide which he bound himself not to commit any encroachment on the possessions of the Cis-Sutlej chiefs, while the British agreed to have no concern with the territories and subjects of the Maharaja to the north of the Sutlej. Naturally, his subsequent expansion was towards the north or west.

44. Rehatsek, E, A Notice of the Gulabnama, in *The Indian Antiquary*, vol. 19, 1890, p. 290.
Munshi Amin Chand (*A History of the Sialkot District*, 1874, p. 2) gives the year of the battle of Rumal as 1785.

45. Gordon, J.H., *The Sikhs*, Rep. 1970, p. 117.

Jammu first attracted his attention in 1800. Seizhing Mirowal, Narowal and Jassarwal on the way, he reached within four miles of Jammu, and encamped there. Finding his escape only in kissing the ground, Ajit Singh, accompanied by his minister, Mian Mota, went out to offer the Maharaja rupees twenty thousand and an elephant. Ranjit Singh, in return, bestowed upon him a robe of honour, and, before returning, confirmed him in his possessions.[46]

The affairs in Jammu, subsequent to this, came to a pretty pass. It is a sad house where the hen crows louder than the cock, and such was the house of Raja Ajit Singh. Being weak and incompetent, he lost the whip hand, and the real power began to be wielded by his extremely ambitious and intriguing queen Bandrall. She soon antagonised Mian Mota and freezed him out to live in Purmandal, about 34 kilometres from Jammu. The Mian, after Ranjit Singh's invasion, used to pay him frequent calls, and the latter set great value on his suggestions regarding the hill affairs. The Maharaja was naturally offended at the minister's virtual expulsion, and decided to invade Jammu once again.[47] By this time, Ranjit Singh's policy of expansion also had taken a concrete shape.

Marching at the head of a large force in the beginning of 1808, he first reduced Pathankot and then Jasrota, Chamba and Basohli. Next, an attack was made on Sialkot, whereafter the Maharaja encamped at Kaluwal, within about 20 kilometres of Jammu. From there, he himself returned, but one of his chiefs, Hukma Singh Chimni, marched on Jammu. The latter had already secured from the Maharaja some territory in jagir in the neighbourhood of Jammu. Now he set his heart upon adding more to it.[48]

Finding themselves incapable of organizing defence against the threatened attack, Ajit Singh and his wife sent appeals to Mian

46. Latif, S.M., op. cit., p. 352 ; M'Gregor, W.L, *The History of the Sikhs*, I, Rep. 1970, p. 154 ; Hutchison and Vogel, op. cit., p. 129.
47. Richmond's Memorandum, f. 12, Kirpa Ram op. cit., pp. 51–52 ; Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., II, pp. 68, 91-92.
48. Richmond's Memorandum, f. 12.

Mota for help in this hour of need. The Mian first refused, but later assented, and at his call flocked in and gathered a large number of Rajputs from the neighbouring areas near the Gumat Gate of the Jammu City. The Sikh forces encamped on the left bank of the river Tawi, opposite the Gate. The battle that followed lasted from morning till evening. In the beginning, the invaders had an upper hand, and, at one stage, the defenders were so hard pressed that they were about to throw up the sponge. But the tables were turned when the battle was joined by a band of young Rajputs led by Gulab Singh. In his baptism of fire, this lad of just sixteen is said to have slain quite a few of the enemy men by jumping from the ground as his hands could not reach their heads. Ultimately, the invaders were completely beaten back.[49] Mian Dido, another Rajput youth, is also said to have displayed his commendable courage and fighting skill in this battle.[50]

But the people of Jammu were fighting against a mighty enemy and could not hope to withstand its onslaught for long. Hence, two days after the battle, they sent Mian Mota to the camp of Misser Dewan Chand to sue for peace. It is undoubtedly better to bend than to break. Maharaja Ranjit Singh also ratified the peace when the Mian and Ajit Singh personally presented themselves before him, and agreed to pay an annual tribute of rupees seventy-three thousand[51] (1809).

There were, however, some people who felt unhappy at this tame surrender, and Gulab Singh and Mian Dido were prominent among them. But while the Mian, as we shall see later, assumed the leadership of this discontented element within his country, Gulab Singh, considering that the game was up, shook the dust off his feet, and left Jammu to seek his fortune outside.

It is said that Gulab Singh first intended to join service under the deposed Shah Shuja of Kabul, who was then recruiting men to

49. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 52-53 ; Bute Shah, op. cit., V. f. 547 ; Rehatsek, E, op. cit., p. 290 ; Shahamat Ali, op. cit., p. 91 ; Panikar, K. M., *Gulab Singh*, 1930, pp. 15-16.
50. Nargis, N.D., *Gulab Singh*, 1965, pp. 18-19; *Mian Dido*, 1964, pp. 15-16.
51 Nargis, N.D., *Gulab Singh* 1965, p. 19 ; Kohli, Sita Ram, *Ranjit Singh*, *1933*, pp. 152-53 ; Latif, S.M., op. cit , p. 383.

recover his throne. But later he abandoned this intention, and took service under Nihal Singh Attariwala's Manager, Dewan Khushwaqt Rai, at Sukhu Chak.[52] He could not, however, stay with the Dewan also for a long time. From there he went to Bhimbar to serve for a short time under Raja Sultan Khan, and ultimately returned to Jammu, where he was married.[53]

It was at this time that Gulab Singh received summons to go to the presence of Ranjit Singh.[54] The latter, hearing from Hukma Singh in glowing terms the deeds of valour displayed by the young Rajput during the defence of Jammu, had felt drawn to see him. Hence, he had written to Mian Mota to come to his court along with Gulab Singh. Full security was assured to both of them. The Maharaja had further written that Hukma Singh had undertaken the invasion of Jammu without his permission.[55] Gulab Singh and Mian Mota, accordingly, put in their appearance before the Maharaja at Daska, a few kilometres from Sialkot, where he was then encamped. Immediately, Gulab Singh was taken into service[56], and enrolled as a *Ghorchara*, or cavalryman,[57]

52. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 54-55.
53. Smyth, G.C., op. cit., pp. 248-249 : Nargis, N.D., *Gulab Singh*, pp. 20-21.
54. Smyth, G.C., op. cit., p. 249.
55. Richmond's Memorandum, f. 13.
56. Kirpa Ram, op. cit, p. 55 ; Hutchison and Vogel, op. cit., p. 130 ; Latif, S.M., op. cit., p. 440 ; Panikar, K.M, op. cit., p. 19 ; Sinha, N.K, *Ranjit Singh*, 1960, p. 180 ; Salig Ram, *Guldasta-i-Kashmir*, 1883. p. 182. Some historians mention that Gulab Singh's younger brother, Dhian Singh, also accompanied him and both entered Ranjit Singh's service simultaneously. (see Smyth, G.C, op. cit., p. 250).
57. The *Ghorcharas* constituted the standing cavalry force of Ranjit Singh. They were classified as the *Ghorcharas Khas* and the *Misldars*. While the former were exclusively recruited from among the noble families of the Panjab, the latter term referred to those small chiefs who, after being subjugated, took up Maharja's service, along with their followers. The salary of a trooper, in the beginning, ranged between rupees three and four hundred per annum ; later it was reduced, and ranged between rupees two hundred and fifty and three hundred. Out of this salary, he was to provide for himself and his horse. No doubt it was small, but still many men liked to be recruited in this section of the army because of the dignity attached to it and for the love of fighting. Kohli, Sita Ram, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, I, 1919, p. 103-107).

on rupees two or three a day.[58] It was then the month of October and the year 1810.[59]

But with Jammu as a tributary state, Ranjit Singh was not content; he wanted to annex it. In fact, he was now thinking of making an attempt on the conquest of Kashmir, and for the successful execution of this objective, it was essential that all the territories to the south of the Pir Panjal range were first completely subjugated. Jammu could not, therefore, escape, and the task was accomplished without any difficulty.

In 1812, Ranjit Singh's son, Kharrak Singh, and the latter's mother set out on a pilgrimage to Jawala Mukhi. Bhaya Ram Singh was deputed to escort them. When they were returning, accompanied with a large retinue of 26,00 troops, Ajit Singh and Mian Mota came out of Jammu to pay their respects, and meet the royal pilgrims near Purmandal. A meeting between the wives of Ranjit Singh and Ajit Singh also was then agreed upon on the condition that the honoured guests would go to Jammu with a small force of about 200 men only. But when the Prince and his mother actually entered the city, in their company were some thousands of men. Frightened, the hosts took to flight, and their followers submitted without fighting. Subsequently, Ajit Singh was pensioned off, and Jammu was conferred as jagir on Kharrak Singh. The latter appointed Dewan Ajit Singh Khullal of Gujrat

58. Rupees two per day, according to [Bute Shah (vol. V, f. 547) and Shahamat Ali (p. 92) ; and rupees three, accoring to G. C. Smyth (p. 250). V. Jacquemont, however, says that Gulab Singh was paid rupees eighteen per month. (Panjab Govt. Monograph No. 19, p. 61), while K.M. Panikar mentions his initial salary as high as rupees two hundred and seventy-five per month (p. 19).

The view taken by us corresponds to the Khalsa Darbar Records. In the rolls of the Darbar pertaining to the year 1814, Gulab Singh "is shown as one of the troopers in the Jamwal cavalry where the name of his brother Dhian Singh is also borne on the list at rupees three per day." (*Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, II, 1927, p. 50 ; also Sinha, N.K, *Ranjit Singh*, p. 180).

59. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 55.

While G.C. Smyth (p.249) wrongly places this event in the beginning of *1811*, K,M. Panikar (p. 18) also is not correct in converting S. *1867* to *1809* A.D.

to govern it on his behalf in consultation with Mian Mota who was assigned one-fourth of its revenues.[60]

Thus was Jammu made a part of the kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

The affairs of Jammu settled, the Maharaja directed himself to Kashmir upon the conquest of which his heart was now definitely set. We have already noted that in 1752 it had fallen into the hands of the Afghans. The Afghan rule in Kashmir, however, turned out to be very oppressive. They "rarely issued an order without a blow of the side of their hatchet, a common weapon of the Afghans, and used by them in war as a battle-axe[61]". Even for trivial offences, the people were tied by the back in pairs, and thrown into the river, and their property was plundered[62].

Quick succession of rulers in Afghanistan and consequently of their governors in Kashmir brought on a further rot in the situation. When Zaman Shah ascended the Afghan throne in 1793, he sent Atta Muhammad to govern Kashmir. But in 1800, the former was ousted by Shah Mahmud, and Kashmir also got a new governor. In 1803, yet another revolution took place in Kabul, and Shah Shuja sat on the throne. He returned Kashmir to Atta Muhammad. But Shah Shuja also could not consolidate his position in Kabul, with the result that in 1809 Shah Mahmud recovered his kingdom. As it was with the assistance of one Fateh Khan that he had succeeded both in 1800 and 1809, Shah Mahmud elevated him to the position of his Wazir, and later deputed him to wrest Kashmir from Atta Muhammad.

Fateh Khan crossed the Indus towards the end of November 1812. A little before, Maharaja Ranjit Singh had conquered Bhimbar and Rajouri, which places commanded the approach to the Pir Panjal mountains, and his forces were still present there. Finding himself quite close to these forces, Fateh Khan thought it

60. Richmond's Memorandum, ff. 14-15 ; Panikar, K.M op. cit., pp. 22-23 ; Kirpa Ram, op. cit. pp. 59-60.
61. Forster, George, op. cit., II, p. 27.
62. Ibid., p. 30.

prudent to come to some understanding with the Maharaja so that the latter did not cross his path. Ranjit Singh also, on his part entertained apprehensions of collaboration between Fateh Khan and Atta Muhammed if he himself alone invaded Kashmir. Both the Maharaja and the Afghan Wazir, therefore, heartily agreed to meet, and thrash out the problem. The outcome of their talks, which were held on December 1, 1812, at Rohtas, on the bank of Jehlum, was the settlement that the Sikhs would help the Afghans in conquering Kashmir in return for the Afghan assistance in the Sikh conquest of Multan[63]. Fateh Khan further consented to "establish and recognize the Government of the Noble Sarkar over one-third of the country of Kashmir and also yield one-third of whatever treasure, property and other things" which might be seized from there.[64].

Both the parties then marched upon Kashmir. The Sikhs, under Dewan Mohkam Chand, however, lagged behind owing to heavy snowfall, to which they were not accustomed. But led by the chief of Rajouri through a short route, they also ultimately reached Sringar in time for the seige of Shergarhi and Hari Parbat forts. After the victory of the combined forces, however, Fateh Khan showed no eagerness to honour his agreement with the Sikhs, with the result that the latter returned from Kashmir empty-handed[65].

The next year, Ranjit Singh made more elaborate preparations for the invasion of Kashmir. He asked all of his chiefs to brace up, and promised remission of a year's revenue to those whose territories commanded passes leading to Kashmir[66]. The chiefs of Jammu, Jasrota, Bhimbar and some other places were summoned for urgent consultations to Lahore[67].

The Maharaja almost simulteously wrote to Wazir Fateh Khan to honour his commitments even now, failing which, he

63. Latif, S.M, op. cit., pp. 394-95.
64. Garrett, H.L.O, and Chopra G.L., *Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh, 1810-17*, Panjab Govt. Records Office Monograph No. 17, Rep. 1970, p. 62.
65. Latif, S.M, op. cit., p. 395,
66. Garrett and Chopra, op. cit., pp. 69, 105.
67. Ibid., pp. 86, 106, 131.

warned, "the army of the Noble Sarkar would go to Kashmir and conquer it by a single attack". But the Wazir replied by marching at the head of a large army towards Peshawar[68]. Azim Khan, Fateh Khan's brother and the new governor of Kashmir, also prepared to meet the threatened invasion. Messages were flashed to the hill chiefs to oppose the Sikhs,[69] and all the bridges over those streams which the enemy had to cross on its way to the Valley were destroyed. At each *Garhi*, or a good defensive position, was placed garrison of five thousand horse and foot. With himself, Azim Khan kept a strong force of twenty thousand horse and foot for a decisive battle at the Pir Panjal pass[70].

The Sikh army, consisting of about fifty thousand men, reached Rajouri in the middle of June 1814. Its officers were urged to spare no sacrifice, and were promised doubling of their jagirs after victory[71]. A bid to win over Raja Ruhullah Khan of Poonch was also made, but it did not succeed. Raja Agar Khan of Rajouri, however, came round, but later he also turned traitor. Not only did he mislead the Sikhs about the size of the enemy, but also succeeded in undermining their strength. When consulted about the best route to Kashmir, he advised to march in two divisions by two different routes of Poonch and Bahramgalla. This was a dark counsel, but it was accepted in good faith and without realising the weakness which it would introduce in the otherwise quite strong army. Accordingly, one division, commanded by Ranjit Singh himself, followed the Poonch route by the Tosa Maidan pass, while the second, under Ram Dayal, marched by the Bahrgamalla route via Shopiyan.

Surmounting the lofty barriers of the Pir Panjal, Ram Dayal drove the Afghans from Mirpur and Hirpur. But at Shopiyan, outnumbered by the enemy, and overwhelmed by heavy rains and hailstrom, he was himself completely routed. (24th July[72]).

68. Ibid., pp. 110-11.
69. Ibid., p. 84.
70. Ibid., pp. 152-53, 107.
71. Ibid., p. 152.
72. Latif, S.M. op. cit., pp. 402-03 ; Prinsep, H.T, op. cit., pp. 83-85; Allen, *History of the Panjab*, II, Rep. 1970, pp. 24-27.

The main army, under the Maharaja, met with no better fortune. In the first instance, he was much harassed, and his march impeded by Ruhullah Khan[73]. And when he reached Poonch (28th June), he was exposed to rain and storm. The town itself was found deserted, and soon the problem of supplies became serious[74]. Still he managed to push on to Mandi, and thence to Tosa Maidan pass where he met Azim Khan. Face to face stood both the armies, but neither took the offensive for several days. It was during this period that Ranjit Singh learnt of the distress of Ram Dayal, and sent to his rescue Bhai Ram Singh and some generals with about five thousand men[75]. But Raja Ruhullah Khan did not allow these men to cross Bahramgalla, and ultimately forced them to retire to Rajouri[76]. By this time, Azim Khan also had launched his offensive, and soon the Sikhs found it difficult to hold their ground. The Maharaja then decided to withdraw. But his retreat also was attended with a heavy loss, partly owing to the inclement weather and partly on account of the harassment inflicted by the tribal followers of the chiefs of Poonch and Rajouri. With difficulty, he fell back on Mandi, thence to Poonch, setting both the places to fire, continued his march, and reached Lahore in the middle of August. Ram Dayal also followed, after concluding peace with the Afghans[77].

Thus ended ignominiously Ranjit Singh's second attempt also at getting Kashmir. But the country still haunted his mind. It is the aching tooth to which the tongue ever turns. Nor was he a man to be disheartened by one or two reverses. Only he bade his time to strike again at a more opportune moment. In the meantime, he occupied himself in suppressing uprisings in Bhimbar and Rajouri. Emboldened by Ranjit Singh's failure, the chiefs of these places had taken to the war-path. But both were defeated, and their territories occupied[78].

73. Garrett and Chopra, op. cit., pp. 155-56
74. Latif, S.M., op. cit., p. 403.
75. Ibid, p. 404.
76. Garrett and Chopra, op. cit., p. 165.
77. Latif, S.M., op. cit p. 404 ; Allen, op. cit., pp. 28-29 ; Prinsep, H.T, op. cit., p. 85 ; M'Gregor, W.L., op. cit., I, pp. 172-74.
78. Latif, S.M, op. cit., p. 406 ; Allen, op. cit , pp. 31-32 ; Prinsep, H.T, op. cit., pp. 86-87 ; M'Gregor, W.L, op. cit., I, p. 176.

The Maharaja's long awaited opportunity of fulfilling his cherished desire came his way after he conquered Multan in 1818. Kashmir was then cut off from Afghanistan, and the Maharaja began to talk openly of his intention to march upon it. Placed in a precarious position, Azim Khan, the governor of Kashmir, attempted to obtain help from the British in India, and even expressed his willingness to accept their suzerainty. But the latter had already come to an understanding with the Sikh ruler. Hence, they refused to interfere. To his ill-luck, Azim Khan's brother, Wazir Fateh Khan, also was murdered at this time, and he was obliged to go to Kabul to take revenge.

After Azim Khan's departure, Kashmir was held by his younger brother, Jabbar Khan[79]. The latter was a tyrant. He treated the Hindus particularly harshly, and many of them fled to India to save their life and honour. Pandit Birbal Dhar, his revenue minister, also was forced to flee, and seek refuge at the court of Ranjit Singh. Urged by him to invade Kashmir immediately[80], the Maharaja left Lahore at the head of a large force in April 1819. This force was, however, divided into three sections. The advance was placed under Misser Dewan Chand. Raja Sultan Khan of Bhimbar, who had been made a prisoner about seven years ago, was now released, and attached to him. The second section, meant to support the first, was put under Prince Kharrak Singh. The Maharaja himself commanded the reserve.

Dewan Chand commenced his march from Bhimbar in May, and occupied Rajouri and Poonch by the beginning of the next month. The supporting divisions then advanced to Rajouri, and kept the communications open. The Maharaja moved to Gujrat and thence to Bhimbar. At the end of June, the Dewan reached Bahramgalla, and secured the passage to the Pir Panjal. Here, he split his army into three sections, each of which was required to enter the Kashmir Valley by a different route. He himself led the one which marched over the Pir Panjal. In vain did the Afghans try to check him, and the whole Sikh force of about twelve

79. Kushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, 1962, p. 131.
80. Chopra, G.L., *The Panjab as a Sovereign State*, 1960, p. 16 ; Latif, S.M., op. cit., p. 417.

thousand strong reached near Shopiyan on June 16. In the meantime, Ranjit Singh arrived at Shahabad, and took upon himself to arrange for the supplies and reinforcements.

With the force of five thousand men, Jabbar Khan was entrenched on the plains of Shopiyan. The Sikh advance fell upon him on July 15, but it was beaten back. A little later, another determined attack was made on the Afghans, and it wrought such a great havoc in their ranks that soon they took wings. Jabbar Khan himself was among the wounded. Staggering from one place to another, he ultimately reached Peshawar. All hurdles removed, the Sikh forces made for Srinagar, which they triumphantly entered the next day, on July 16. So great was the joy of Ranjit Singh that he ordered the cities of Lahore and Amritsar to be illuminated for three nights[81].

Thus became both Jammu and Kashmir a part of the kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. But, as already noted, while the possession of Kashmir was an end with him, that of Jammu and other hill territories, such as Bhimbar and Rajouri, served primarily as a means to achieve that end. Little wonder, after its subjugation, Jammu did not engage as much attention of the Maharaja as did Kashmir ; nor did the former become as integral part of his kingdom as the latter. While Kashmir was administered through a governor, Jammu was made over to Prince Kharrak Singh as a jagir. The arrangement in the case of the latter, however, soon broke down, and the history of this region took altogether a new turn.

81. Latif, S.M, op. cit., pp. 417-18 : Allen, op. cit., pp. 50-53 ; Prinsep, H.T, op. eit., pp. 96-98.

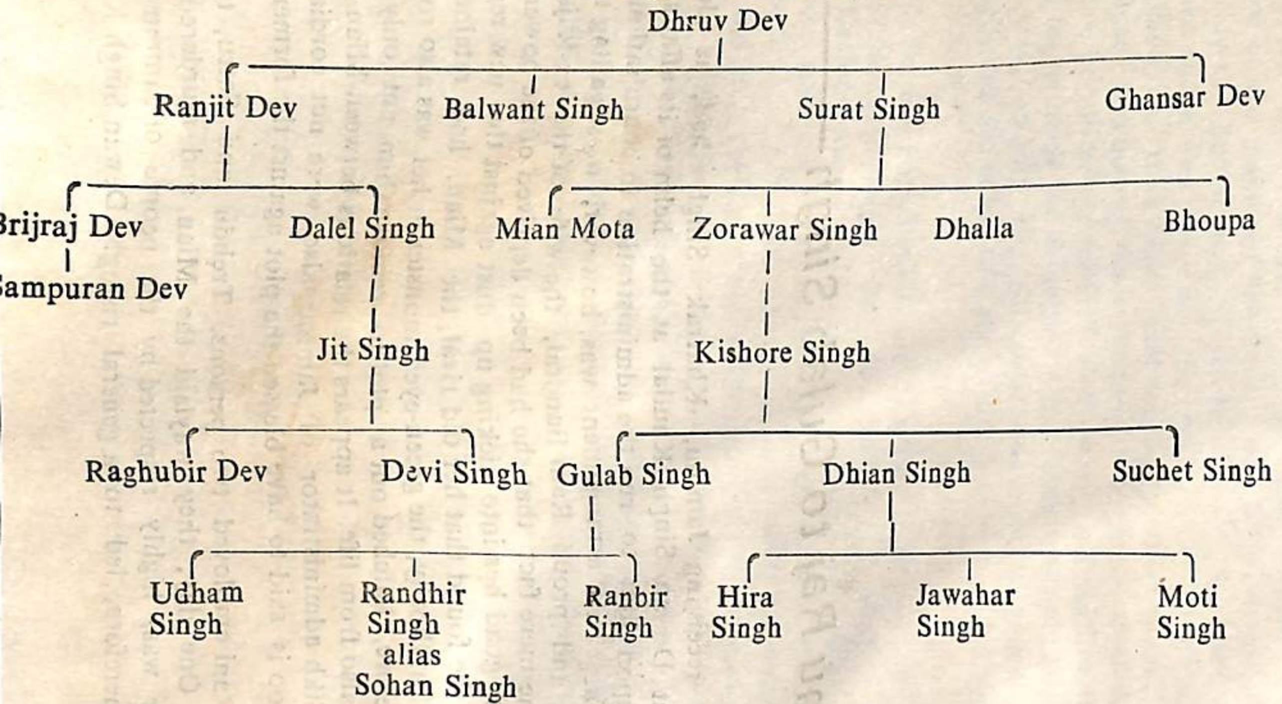
CHAPTER THIRD

Jammu Raj to Gulab Singh

After receiving Jammu, Kharrak Singh had, as already noted, put Dewan Singh Khullal at the helm of its affairs, and enjoined upon him to run the administration in consultation with Mian Mota. This arrangement was, however, most galling to the ambitious and proud Rani Bandral, the wife of the ex-Raja Ajit Singh. The mere fact that she had been deprived of the power was sufficient to goad her into kicking up dust against the new regime. But when she found that her old rival, the Mian, had retained his position of authority, the green-eyed monster in her was also roused. She, therefore, hatched out a plot to remove him not only from office but also from life. It appears the relations between Mian Mota and the Sikh administrator of Jammu also were not cordial, for the later too is said to have blessed the plot against the former.

The Rani employed two persons, Trehdu and Satru, to do the job. One day, they waylaid the Mian, and murdered him. The latter was, highly respected by the people of Jammu. His murder, therefore, led to a general rising. Dewan Singh Khullal

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tried his best to suppress it, but without any success. Thereupon, he resigned and went back to Lahore. Ranjit Singh then gave Jammu in farm to Chowdhri Dullu, a former local minister, for rupees one lakh and seventy thousand per annum[1] (1813). But he also found the task of realising the revenue an extremely difficult one. Sometime later, therefore, when Jammu was farmed out to Dewan Bhiwani Dass, the amount was reduced to rupees one lakh only[2].

In the meantime, Gulab Singh, the hero of the battle of Gumat, was steadily rising in favour at the Lahore Court. Born on 5th Katik, S. 1849, corresponding to October 21, 1792, he was the son of Kishore Singh whose grandfather, Surat Singh, was the brother of Raja Ranjit Dev.[3] We know not whether Gulab Singh received any regular education or not, but certainly he was not illiterate ; he could easily read and write, and some original documents written by him in Dogri are still available in the Punjab Government Records Office at Patiala. Like any other Rajput, he also learnt all the manly arts—riding, fencing and shooting. It is said that at an early age, he became a disciple of one Baba Prem Dass who formerly lived in the village of Sarruinsar, near Purmandal, but later shifted to another village near Kahna Chak.* Once, when Gulab Singh was staying with the Baba for a night, he did not get up even though the day had dawned. He had, therefore, to be awoken up. On getting up, he told his Guru that just

1. Richmond's Memorandum, ff. 15-16 ; Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 59-60 ; Panikar, K.M. op. cit., p. 23.
2. Kohli, Sita Ram, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, II, 1927, p. 59.
3. Besides *Gulabnama*, the official biography of Gulab Singh, the other important works which give this genealogy of the man include Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Bute Shah's *Tarikh-i-Panjab*, V, f. 549 ; Pt. Raja Ram Tota's *Gulgashat-i-Panjab* f. 233 ; *Iqbalnama-i-Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, f. 113 ; Richmond's Memorandum, ff. 13-14 ; *V. Jacquemond's Travels*, Panjab Government Records Office Monograph No. 18, Rep. 1971, p. 61. There are, however, some other works, particularly S.S. Thorburn's *The Panjab in Peace and War*. Rep. 1970, p. 29 ; Lepel Griffin's *Ranjit Singh*, 1967, p. 126 ; Hugh Pearse's *Soldier and Traveller*, Rep. 1970, p. 208 ; J.D. Cunningham's *History of the Sikhs*, 1966, p. 161, which cast doubt on this genealogy. But their assertions are the outcome more of their malice against Gulab Singh than research.

*30 kms. west of Jammu.

then he was seeing a dream in which he was first crowned as the ruler of Jammu, and then had ordered his troops to march on Kashmir. Baba Prem Dass had already seen on the young boy's forehead marks of royalty. Good luck, he said to him, and advised him to set off immediately in search of a fortune.[4]

In fortune's lap had undoubtedly now landed not only Gulab Singh but also the other members of his family. For sometime past, Ranjit Singh had been following a policy of employing not only the Sikhs but others also, and, consequently, a number of Gaur Brahmans from Uttar Pradesh, Pandits from Kashmir, and even Europeans had found their way into his service, and came to occupy high posts. The Dogra Rajputs of Jammu were also welcomed, and, in 1812, Gulab Singh's father, Mian Kishore Singh, and younger brother, Dhian Singh, became servants of the Maharaja. But while Dhian Singh was granted a monthly salary of rupees sixty, his father received only one-fourth of that.[5] A little later, Suchet Singh, then a lad of twelve and the youngest son of Kishore Singh, was also introduced into the Lahore Court.

In 1813, both Gulab Singh and his father took active part in a pitched battle which the Lahore forces fought and won against Fateh Khan of Kabul for the possession of Attock.[6] In the Maharaja's abortive attempt of 1814 to conquer Kashmir also Gulab Singh had a memorable share. While retreating, a detachment of the Sikh forces moved down from Mandi to Bushahir. It was, however, soon surrounded by the turbulent zamindars of the area, and exposed to great dangers. But Gulab Singh, who was also accompanying the detachment, put them to rout, and secured a safe passage for his colleagues. Great was the reward for this bravery. The Maharaja granted him the jagirs of Kharoti

4. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 51 ; Nargis, N.D., *Gulab Singh*, 1965, pp. 13-16.

5. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 55 ; see also Latif, S.M. op. cit., p. 440 ; Cunningham, J.D, op. cit., p. 161 ; Sinha, N.K., *Ranjit Singh*, p. 180 ; Panikar, K.M., op. cit. p. 19 ; Hutchison and Vogel, op. cit., p. 130.
G.C. Smyth (p. 250), however, says that Dhian Singh joined the Lahore Darbar along with Gulab Singh.

6. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 58.

and Beyol, or Babool*, and also promoted him to the command of twenty-two horse.[7]

From a mere wanderer in 1810, Gulab Singh had thus become a jagirdar within four years, and there was no looking back thereafter. For a few years to come, his further rise was rather astonishingly quick. Sometime in 1815, he received in jagir Lala-Chobara in the Sialkot District, and Ramgarh, near Samba**, for rendering valuable services in the reduction of Garh Damala fort in the Jullundur Doab. Yet another distinction then conferred upon him was the right to raise as his own a company of two hundred horsemen.[8]

On one occasion, however, Gulab Singh became involved in the tangled politics of Jammu, and, through a rash action, had almost ruined his career. It so happened that when the assassination of Mian Mota took place, Gulab Singh was away on an expedition to Attock. Highly agitated though he was when he learnt of the treacherous murder of his granduncle, he possessed his soul for the time being, and awaited a suitable opportunity to pay out. The assassins in the meantime came to Lahore, and entered the service of Prince Kharrak Singh. One day, encountering both of them in the city, Gulab Singh and Dhian Singh fired at them. Trehdu was instantly killed, but Satru escaped. Both Gulab Singh and Dhian Singh were supposed to get their medicine for what they had done, and their career seemed to have ended with it. But as good luck would have it, Ranjit Singh appreciated their patriotic feelings which impelled them to commit the murder, appointed Gulab Singh a commander of sixty horse, and desired Dhian Singh to remain in constant attendance in the Court.[9]

7. Ibid., pp. 66-69 ; Bute Shah, op. cit., V. f. 547 ; Vadehra, Ganesh Dass, *Chahar Bagh-i-Panjab*, p. 156.

According to Bute Shah, Gulab Singh got the command of sixty horse, was allowed fifty additional horse, and the value of his jagir was rupees twelve thousand per annum.

8. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 71-74.
9. Richmond's Memorandum, f. 16 ; see also Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 62-64; Shahamat Ali, op. cit., pp. 92-93 ; Smyth, G.C., op. cit., pp. 251-52 ; Panikar, K.M., op. cit., p. 23 ; Tota, Pt. Raja Ram, op. cit., f. 283.

*About 24 kms. from Plina.

**Ramgarh is about 19 kms. south-west of Samba.

Soon followed more opportunities for Gulab Singh to make his mark as a soldier, and get into the Maharaja's good graces. Of special mention is his part in the expeditions to Multan (1818),[10] Kashmir (1819), Mankera and Dera Ghazi Khan (1819—20) ; and in all of these he acquitted himself with great distinction. When, however, he was away on the last named expedition, Gulab Singh's grandfather, Mian Zorawar Singh, expired at Ramgarh, with the result that he and his father, who was also then with him, had to hasten back with the Maharaja's permission.[11]

The year 1816-17 constitutes yet another landmark in the early career of Gulab Singh. He then became the proud possessor of Riasi*. This place orginally belonged to Mian Dewan Singh who was mostly up in arms against the Lahore Darbar. He was

10. While describing the Multan campaign, Kirpa Ram (pp. 75-76) says that it was personally led by Ranjit Singh. It further mentions that an important Sikh noble was slain during fighting, and that orders were then issued for the recovery of his body which lay near the enemy lines. None but Gulab Singh came forward to do the job. "Undaunted by a shower of bullets", he "rushed in among the combatants, and returned to the amazement of everyone with the corpse of the Sardar."

But these details are in conflict with those of the Multan expedition of 1818. In the first place, this expedition was led not by Ranjit Singh but by his son Kharrak Singh. Secondly, no other source refers to the death of any important chief whose dead body was desired to be picked up from the battle field. However, in the beginning of 1810 also, the Sikhs had attacked Multan. It was no doubt led personally by the Maharaja, and he lost a number of valiant comanders, including Attar Singh Dhari, one of his "most loyal" officers. (Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, I, 1966, p. 236). But Gulab Singh had not as yet joined Ranjit Singh's service, so that he cannot be said to have taken part in this expedition. Moreover, according to S.M. Latif (p. 387), the Afghans themselves returned to the Sikhs, "Wrapped in a pair of shawls", the dead body of Attar Singh, "a favourite companion and confidential Sardar of the Maharaja". Evidently, the account given in the *Gulabnama* is incorrect. There is, however, no denying the fact that Gulab Singh did participate in the Multan campaign of 1818. This is admitted by Ranjit Singh himself in his Sanad of 1822, granting the Jammu Raj to him (Infra. 45).

11. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 88-91, 98-100. Mian Zorawar Singh had shifted his residence from his ancestral jagir of Samilpur, about 18 kilometres east of Jammu to Ramgarh soon after it was granted to Gulab Singh. (Ibid., p. 74).

*79 kms. north of Jammu.

also suspected to have been an accomplice in the murder of Mian Mota. Ranjit Singh, therefore wanted to take away his territory by way of punishment, and confer it on one who was loyal to him. The man chosen was Gulab Singh, and he took possession of the place without much difficulty, as Dewan Singh was then away in the plains. A new fort, Bhimgarh, was soon built there, and placed under Zorawar Singh Kahluria, a trusted soldier of Gulab Singh. Sometime later, however, this fort was threatened by the old jagirdars of Riasi. But the timely help extended to Zorawar Singh by Gulab Singh's deputy at Jammu, Dewan Amir Chand, and his own father saved the situation. Soon after, Gulab Singh himself also arrived there, and, by way of examplary punishment, cut into pieces Surto Bhagial, the chief leader of the supporters of Dewan Singh "so that haunts of wickedness were driven out of the brains of crooked rebels and they beg for quarters out of fear and agree to pay tribute and submit". But it took him another year or so to establish his firm hold in the area.[12]

Mian Dido also was a supporter of Dewan Singh. He is said to have descended from Raja Hari Dev of Jammu (1650-58). Normally, he resided with his father, Mian Hazari, at his jagir of Jugti, about sixteen kilometres to the north of Jammu.[13] In defending Jammu against Hukma Singh's attack in 1808-09, he and Gulab Singh had worked in unison. But later, while Gulab Singh had accepted Ranjit Singh's service, Dido set his face against the Sikh rule in Jammu. Many like-minded youngmen also rallied round the latter, and soon he became a terror. Generous and helpful to the oppressed and the poor as he was, he won the heart of the common man. Wherever, therefore, he went, he was received with open arms. One touch of nature makes the whole world kin. Like a bravado, accompanied with few followers, he would attack a strong garrison of the Sikhs, and escape unmolested after some fighting. "It is said that seldom fifteen days passed without an achievement of this kind, and according to tradition, Deedo, from time to time, slew, with his own hand, above

12. Ibid., pp. 77-85; Garret and Chopra, op. cit., pp. 264, 269.
13. Smyth, G.C., op. cit., p. 255 : Shahamat Ali, op. cit., p. 94; Hutchison and Vogel, op. cit., p. 129 : Nargis, N.D, *Mian Dido*, 1964, pp. 8-10.

three hundred of his enemies, the Seikhs." Soon his word became law in the hills of Jammu, and the Lahore authorities found it impossible to collect revenue from there.[14]

These were ominous developments and warnings too pregnant to be disregarded. Ranjit Singh was, therefore, quick in despatching one expedition after another against Dido, but the latter remained unsubdued.[15] Sometime in the beginning of 1816, even Kharrak Singh, whose jagir Jammu was, came here to supervise the operations, but he too returned without accomplishing anything.[16] Mian Dido, therefore, became bolder and bolder with the passage of time, and the things came to such a pass that one day he looted some baskets full of fruits and other goods which were being sent from Srinagar to Lahore for the personal use of the Maharaja[17]. This meant that communication also between the Panjab and Kashmir was now unsafe. There was a large trade in shawls between these parts of Ranjit Singh's kingdom, and it was bound to be affected adversely as a result of Dido's activities. The Maharaja was naturally well waded with worry. "It became clear," says Panikar, "either that he (Dido) had to be put down or that Ranjit Singh would have to withdraw to Sialkot"[18]. But withdrawal to Sialkot was out of question, for that would amount to an open invitation to all the hill chiefs of the area to rise against his authority ; and if this happened, his hold over the recently acquired territory of Kashmir would be placed in a jeopardy. The matter had thus now come to a head, and, without waiting any further, Ranjit Singh resolved to lead himself an expedition against Dido.

Opportunity seldom knocks twice ; it was knocking now, and Gulab Singh was not the man to let it slip. He immediately came forward, and begged a chance to chastise the rebel before the Maharaja himself took the trouble. To Ranjit Singh also

14. Smyth, G.C , op. cit., pp. 253-54 ; Nargis, N.D., *Mian Dido*, pp. 21-23; Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 104-06 ; Garret and Chopra, op. cit., pp. 180, 213, 217, 219, 222.
15. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., II, p. 191.
16. Garrett and Chopra, op. cit., pp. 234, 237.
17. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 106-07; Nargis, N.D., *Mian Dido*, pp. 43-44; Richmond's Memorandum, ff. 16-17.
18. Panikar, K.M , op. cit., p. 27.

nothing could have been more gratifying. The request was, therefore, then and there granted[19]. But practical minded as the Maharaja was, he also realised the necessity of lacing with proper authority and dignity a man who was to deal with a formidable foe of the stature of Mian Dido. Accordingly, on November 30, 1820, Ranjit Singh granted Gulab Singh, his father and two brothers jointly as jagir "the taalluqa of the Chakla of Jammu"[20] (meaning all the territory connected with Jammu), along with the small states of Patti-Bhoti, Bandraltha, Chineni and Kishtwar.[21] But this grant was made on the conditions that, first, the grantees were to maintain four hundred horsemen for the service of the Maharaja; secondly, they were to protect the caravan route to Kashmir, and make good any loss that a traveller or trader might suffer while using it ; thirdly, they were to either capture or kill Dido or force him across the Sutlej ; fourthly, they were to make every year presents of certain number of horses, falcons, and beautiful and accomplished slave girls, and saffron from Kishtwar ; fifthly, the fortress of Sumergarh (Samarth in the Bhadu territory ?) and the strategically situated fortress of Kotli on the road to Kashmir were to serve as garrisons for the Lahore troops ; and, lastly, they were to inform the Lahore Government whenever there was an increase in their territory.

All the three brothers and their father gladly agreed to abide by these conditions, and even gave their written acceptance on November 30 and December 19, 1820.[22] The Maharaja was then further pleased to grant Mian Kishore Singh the title of Raja, and appointed him as the administrator of the new jagir, with wide powers.[23]

19. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 107 ; Nargis, N.D., *Mian Dido*, pp. 43-44.
20. The Taalluqa of Jammu appears in the revenue records for the first time in S. 1874-75 (A.D. 1817-18). Here we notice a jagir of the value of Rs. 4,000 per annum granted to Gulab Singh (Kohli, Sita Ram, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, II, 1927, p. 59).
21. Of these states, while Kishtwar was independent and had yet to be conquered, the rest were dependent upon Jammu.
22. D-38, Patials Archives, translated by J.S. Grewal in *From Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 1972, pp. 113-14; Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., I, pp. 281, 298. Maghar 15 and Poh 5, S. 1877, are the actual dates of this acceptance.
23. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., II, p. 287; Kohli, Sita Ram, *Ranjit Singh*, 1933, p. 244.

Ranjit Singh's new policy towards Jammu speaks volumes of his shrewdness. Through it, he hoped to achieve three main objectives ; first, to weaken the people of Jammu by causing a split among them, and setting one section of them against the other ; secondly, to control this troublesome tract through their own men but who were fully loyal to him also ; and, thirdly, to ensure the safety of the route to Kashmir.

In pursuance of his new assignment, Gulab Singh immediately left for Jammu, and, on reaching there, tried to force his rival into submission through a novel modus operandi. Mian Dido used to move from place to place. Wherever he went, his followers announced his arrival, and the people brought him whatever supplies he needed. Working on this information, Gulab Singh sent his own men in certain villages, asked them to pose as those of Dido, and demand supplies in his name. When the villagers turned up, they were seized, and taken to task for helping the Mian. By this stratagem, Gulab Singh not only gave them the shivers, but also created a web of confusion in their minds. Knowing not whether the demand was made by Gulab Singh or Mian Dido, they refused to furnish supplies to any one.

Gulab Singh then marched on Jugti. There his men found Dido's aged father, Mian Hazari, and killed him. Dido himself had taken refuge on the Trikuta peak* where is located the famous shrine of Vaishno Devi. A party of Gulab Singh's men was, therefore, sent there to hunt him down. It surrounded the Trikuta hill on all sides, sealed every route of escape, and asked the Mian to surrender. But he challenged them to a fight, for he had never known what surrender was. Then followed a brief struggle between the two unmatched sides, and the gallant Dido was easily shot dead[24].

A little later, Gulab Singh was commissioned to perform yet another difficult job. We have already noted that in 1819 Ranjit Singh had conquered Kashmir. His earlier attempts in 1812, 1813

24. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 107-10.
Richmond (Memorandum, f. 17) says that the encounter between Gulab Singh and Dido took place at Sudh Mahadev, near Chineni.

*About 50 kms. north of Jammu.

and 1814 had, however, failed. The failure of the 1814 expedition was attributed mainly to the intrigues of Raja Agar Khan of Rajouri. In 1819 also, he had given considerable trouble to the Sikh forces. To punish him, therefore, his territory had been raided, and occupied. But he himself had fled, covering up all of his traces. The Maharja now wished to seize him. But who would seize him ? Ranjit Singh cast his eyes around, and found that only Gulab Singh could do the job. The latter also willingly accepted this challenge. The vast hilly area was, consequently scanned, the fugitive ultimately taken a prisoner, and sent to Lahore[25].

In 1821, Gulab Singh occupied Kishtwar also. It may be stated here that a year ago when Ranjit Singh had granted this territory to the Jammu family, it was not in his possession. The grant, therefore, merely amounted to a license to subjugate Kishtwar[26], and Gulab Singh subjugated it without striking a blow. Its ruler was Tej Singh, and Lakhpat Rai was his Wazir. Through a stratagem, Gulab Singh sowed seeds of estrangement between them. The trick was so successful that one day Tej Singh tried to lay violent hands on his Wazir. But the latter managed to escape, and a little [latter joined Gulab Singh's service. Tej Singh also subsequently came down to Doda to submit on the promise of safety and pardon. But he was arrested. After some time, however, he was released. Then he went to Lahore to make an appeal to the Maharaja[27]. The latter turned down his appeal. but granted him a handsome pension[28].

Thus, by 1821, Gulab Singh's authority came to be established over a vast area in the Jammu region. His brothers also at Lahore had gradually got into the favour of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. In

25. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 111-13 ; Allen, op. cit., II, p. 55 ; M' Gregor, W.L., op. cit., I, p. 188 ; Latif, S.M., op. cit., p. 421 ; Princep, H.T., op. cit., p. 99.
26. It is said that Ranjit Singh was not happy with Raja [Tej Singh because the latter had granted asylum to Shah Shujah, the ex-King of Kabul, after he had escaped from Lahore. Hence, he wanted Gulab Singh to punish the Raja.
27. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 95-97.
28. Khalsa Darbar Records, Patiala Archives, B-13, vol- XVI, f. 311 ; B-12, vol. XVI, ff. 285-89.

1818, Dhian Singh was appointed to the coveted post of the Deodhi Officer, or the Lord Chamberlain. Suchet Singh was authorised to listen to some petitions of the people, and dispose them of[29].

In 1822, Gulab Singh's father, Raja Kishore Singh, passed away[30]. Sometime before, his *Rajaship* had been declared "permanent". After his death, therefore, all of his three sons requested the Maharaja to come to Jammu, and confer the *Rajgi* on any one of them[31]. Having nothing but praise for this proposal, Ranjit Singh left Lahore, and reached Akhnur, about 32 kilometres from Jammu. It is said that his original intention was to make only Gulab Singh the Raja of Jammu[32]. But this view is contested by some scholars. While some of them hold that it was Dhian Singh, the wisest of all the three brothers, whom Ranjit Singh had marked out for the conferment,[33] others opine that not only he but along with him Suchet Singh also was to be bestowed upon the *Rajaship* as both these brothers possessed "good looks and more compliant disposition," and were, therefore, "personally more in favour with the Maharaja than was Mian Goolauboo". Neither Dhian Singh nor Suchet Singh was, however, prepared to accept any arrangement in which Gulab Singh's seniority was overlooked[34]. The Maharaja was pleased to agree with their view point. But a day before the investiture ceremony, that is, on Har 3, S. 1879 (June 16, 1822), he obtained a joint undertaking from the three brothers to the effect that, first, they would serve him, generation after generation, with submission, obedience, fidelity, sincerity, devotion and selflessness ; secondly, the troops which they were already required to maintain would always be kept in perfect readiness for the service of the Maharaja ; thirdly, their position was entirely dependent upon the suzerain ; fourthly, the family and retainers of Dhian Singh, including his son, Hira Singh, would permanently reside at Lahore[35] ; fifthly and sixthly, they would

29. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., II, p. 232 ; Kirpa Ram, op. cit , pp.86-87.
30. Bute Shah, op. cit., V, f. 548.
31. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., II, p. 298.
32. Richmond's Memorandum, f. 18.
33. Nargis, N.D, *Gulab Singh*, pp. 51-52.
34. Smyth. G.C. op. cit., pp. 255-56.
35. This condition amounted to virtually keeping Dhian Singh's family as hostages at Lahore.

willingly work for the Maharaja whenever and wherever called upon to do so, and even when placed in a subordinate position to any one ; and, lastly, they had submitted this undertaking of their own accord and on solemn oaths[36].

Ranjit Singh took yet another precaution in order to stave of any complication later on. He seems to have asked Ajit Singh, the rigthful and hereditary ex-ruler of Jammu, to execute a deed renouncing proprietorship to all the protected territories of his ancestors and his own inheritance in favour of Gulab Singh, Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh, and also disinherit his two sons from any share in these possessions. Ajit Singh had no choice, and did all that was wanted of him.[37] The wings of all the possible rivals of Gulab Singh and his brothers were thus clipped.

Both from the undertaking of the three brothers and the relinquishing deed of Raja Ajit Singh, the inference is inescapable that the original intention of Maharja Ranjit Singh was to confer the Jammu Raj jointly on Gulab Singh, Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh, as had been done in 1820 as well. But the next day, on Har 4 (June 17), Ranjit Singh granted only to Gulab Singh and his descendants, in recognition of his own and his ancestors' loyal and devoted service in the cause of the Maharaja and the State, in the conquest of Kashmir and Multan and many other military campaigns, the government of the Chakla of Jammu, which from time immemorial had been in the possession of his family. Suchet Singh also was, no doubt, created Raja but of Bandraltha[38].

It seems Ranjit Singh changed his mind overnight and discarded the concept of joint *Rajgi* of a place as impracticable. Both Gulab Singh and Suchet Singh were, therefore, made Rajas but of different territories. Significantly, however, Dhian Singh was

36. D-39. Patiala Archives, translated by J.S. Grewal, op. cit., pp. 117-18. The undertaking in this case as well as in that of 1820, when the *Rajgi* was conferred on Mian Kishore Singh and his three sons, shows that such practice was a routine affair. (see Grewal, J.S, op. cit., p. 182, n. 18).

37. D-40, Patiala Archives.

38. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 116-17; Panikar, K.M, op. cit., pp. 32-34; M/918, Patiala Archives—Paras Ram Hakim, *Extracts on Panjab History*, f. 16. Bandraltha is 97 kms. east of Jammu.

completely left out. Surprised at this, Gulab Singh requested the Maharaja with folded hands to honour Dhian Singh also likewise. But Ranjit Singh replied that to Dhian Singh he proposed to award no jagir, as his intention was to raise him up to the position of *Raja-i-Rajagan*, or a Raja of Rajas.

While performing the Raj-Tilak ceremony of Gulab Singh at Akhnur[39], Ranjit Singh created yet another sensation. The usual practice was to apply the saffron mark on one's forehead upwards. But he did it downwards. On being begged to account for this unusual action, the Maharaja said that he had "firmly sowed the seed in the soil that it may thrive well, hold its roots strong in the earth, and last for ever."[40]

From Akhnur, Gulab Singh went to Jammu, where Ajit Singh also is said to have anointed him to the Raj with his own hands.[41]

From a mere wanderer to a Raja is indeed a far cry, but Gulab Singh did it, and did it within just about ten years of his service under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He had, therefore, every reason to feel in the seventh heaven. The new elevation granted him large amount of autonomy, both internal and external. While no explicit veto was placed upon his powers in regard to the internal administration, he was only required to inform the Maharaja, by virtue of of the undertaking of 1820, whenever there was any addition to his territory. Shrewed as Gulab Singh was, he was not slow in grasping the implications of his new position, and the extension of his possessions was only a question of time.

But immediately after becoming the Raja, he lost himself in reorganising the administration of his territories, and, in order to give his whole hearted attention to this task, he began spending

39. It seems the investiture ceremony was not held at Jammu in order to avoid any untoward incident which could take place on account of the presence there of its hereditary ruler who still had a large following. And the choice of Akhnur can be explained away by the fact that Gulab Singh had a strong support there as his father had lived there for a long time.
40. Panikar, K.M, op. cit., p. 32 ; M/921, Patiala Archives—Paras Ram Hakim, *Studies on Ranjit Singh*, f. 110.
41. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 119.

most of his time at Jammu, going to Lahore only on special occasions or whenever summoned.

Among the various administrative matters, to the internal peace and fiscal policy he gave the highest priority. Owing to the absence of a settled rule for sometime past, security had become the first casualty. Highway robbery and murder had become so common that "a cap or a pagri that a traveller might wear was enough for a temptation to plunder and violence." But all this Gulab Singh put down with a firm hand[42], and established police stations at a number of places for the protection of both trade and travellers. The taxation system also was overhauled, and the duties were levied on a moderate scale.[43] Soon the trade thrived, and the products of Jammu, like *Dandasa* (the bark of a tree used by women for cleaning their teeth) began to be exported without any difficulty to such distant places as Multan and even Persia.[44]

The country thus became settled, and again headed for palmy days. V. Jacquemont, a French scientist and traveller who passed through Gulab Singh's territory in 1831, wrote :

> All the same Gulab Singh is more the master of his own house than is Ranjit in these distant possessions (Mirpur-Kotli side). There are two reasons for this, Gulab Singh pays his soldiers and retainers more regularly, and he hangs indiscriminately any prisoners that he catches.[45]

Wise men learn by the mistakes of others, and Gulab Singh seems to have learnt by those of Ranjit Singh. But it goes to the credit of the latter that when the results of Gulab Singh's measures caught his eyes, he appreciated them. In fact, so great was the spell cast on him by Gulab Singh's success that he entrusted him with the management of the following areas, at different times, to be held as farms from the Lahore Government[46] :—

42. Drew, Frederick, op. cit., p. 13.
43. Richmond's Memorandum, f. 18.
44. Hugel, Baron Charles, op. cit., p. 67.
45. Jacquemont, V, *The Punjab A Hundred Years Ago*, Punjab Govt. Record Office Monograph No. 18, 1971, pp. 64-65, 67.
46. Cunningham, J.D, op. cit., pp. 383-86. See also Appendix I.

Farms	*Estimated income*
	Rs.
Chukh Hazara and Pukhlee Dhumtour	1,50,000
Djunnee, Kuttas and Chakkowal	1,00,000
Sialkot	50,000
Bhera Khushab	1,00,000
Pind Dadan Khan	50,000
Gujrat	3,00,000
Salt mines	8,00,000

Gulab Singh would surely have not made so high a grade in the field of administration had he not been served by a band of able, intelligent and devoted men, mostly from the Panjab. Prominent among them were Amir Chand, Jawala Sahai, Hari Chand, Nihal Chand, Lakhpat Rai and Zorawar Singh. Willingly they shouldered all the cares of state, and relieved their master of many tiring details.

CHAPTER FOUR

Expansion of the Jammu Raj

Soon after Gulab Singh had set his house in order, he thought of extending his territorial possessions also, and the fort of Samartah was the first to which he addressed himself in 1824-25. We have already noted that in 1822, Maharaja Ranjit Singh had conferred on Raja Suchet Singh the jagir of Bandraltha. The latter renamed it Ramnagar, and populated it with people from Peshawar, Tonk Bannu, Multan, Lahore, Kashmir and some other places. In due course of time, it came to rival the city of Jammu in prosperity.[1] Sometime later, Mankot also was taken possession of by Suchet Singh, and renamed Ramkot. As the fort of Samartah was surrounded by these two territories and those of Jasrota and Bhadu, it occupied an important position vis-a-vis the possessions of the Jammu or Dogra brothers as Gulab Singh, Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh had now come to be called. Gulab Sing, therefore, laid siege to Samartah with the help of about one

1. Richmond's Memorandum, f. 19.

thousand men. But his plan ran into a snag as the fort was protected by a moat. Preparations were then set on foot to fill the moat with felled trees. Some ladders for scaling also were procured. A warning was simultaneously given to the besieged to be prepared for dire consequences if they delayed their surrender. Quick came the response, the fighting ceased, and Gulab Singh became the master of the fort. When Ranjit Singh heard of it, he sent his own men to take possession of Samartah. But later on, he bestowed not only this fort but along with it Ramkot and Samba also on Suchet Singh.[2]

Bhimbar was next to fall into the hands of the Dogra brothers. Sultan Khan, its ruler, had been made a prisoner by Ranjit Singh in 1812. But in 1819, he was released to do a good turn to the Maharaja in the conquest of Kashmir, and his reward was the restoration of a part of his territory. Later, he and Rahmatullah Khan, who had been recognised as the ruler of Rajouri in place of the rebellious Agar Khan, bore Gulab Singh's company on an expedition towards Peshawar. The expedition was directed against Syed Ahmad, a fanatic (1827). When the three returned from Peshawar, after accomplishing their job, Gulab Singh asked Sultan Khan and Rahmatullah Khan to sojourn at Jammu, which they agreed to do. One day, they were invited to see Gulab Singh in his palace. They went, but suspecting some foul play, Rahmatullah Khan left immediately, and then secretly escaped to Rajouri. This set Gulab Singh's back up. His confidence in Sultan Khan also was shattered. The latter was, therefore, cast into prison, and his State was declared to have been annexed to the Lahore Kingdom.[3] But Ranjit Singh gave away this territory as well as that of Chibbhal, including Poonch, as jagir to Dhian Singh.[4]

Dhian Singh had, by this time, grown so much upon the Maharaja that this grant was made at a grand function held in March 1828. To mark further the estimation in which he held

2. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 125-27 ; Nargis, N.D, *Gulab Singh*, pp. 63-64.
3. Shahmat Ali, op. cit., pp. 100-02.
4. D-42, Patiala Archives.

his Chamberlain, Ranjit Singh awarded him the title of *Raja-i-Rajgan, Raja Kalan Bahadur*, or Raja of Rajas, and also made him him his chief minister.[5]

The Raja Kalan had a son, named Hira Singh. Now aged about twelve, he too was created a Raja. Being the Maharaja's "object of particular favour."[6] he was further extended the privilege of sitting in a chair, while all other courtiers, including his own father, had to stand or sit on the ground.[7]

The authority of the Dogra brothers in the hill region of Poonch was, however, seriously threatened in 1837 by one Shams-ud-Din Khan. He was chief of the Sudhan tribe, but had submitted to the Dogras, and taken service with Dhian Singh. Although treated kindly, yet he proved perfidious. In May 1837, when Gulab Singh and Dhian Singh had gone on an expedition towards Peshawar consequent upon the sudden death of Hari Singh Nalwa, the well-known general of Ranjit Singh, Shams-ud-Din gave currency to a rumour that both of them had been killed in a battle. This fanned the flame of rebellion in the Poonch and Chibbhal territory, and the Dogra garrisons stationed in most of the forts there were put to the sword. Gulab Singh, when apprised of these happenings, was ablaze with anger. He wrote to Mian Singh, the Sikh Governor of Kashmir, to take immediate action against the rebel. Ranjit Singh also urged his Governor to quell the rebellion, and, if need be, to proceed to Poonch in person. Thereupon, Mian Singh despatched 500 men via Tosa Maidan. But they were also defeated by Shams-ud-Din.[8] Ultimately, when Gulab Singh returned from Peshawar, he himself entered the disturbed hill region from the side of Kahati, near the Jehlum, while another force was ordered to come from Jammu[9]. After some desultory

5. Shahmat Ali, op. cit., pp. 95-96 : D-41 and D-42, Patiala Archives ; Latif, S.M, op. cit., p. 465.
6. Allen, op. cit., p. 86 ; Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, pp. 159-60.
7. Jacquemont, V, op. cit., pp. 59–60 ; Latif, S.M, op. cit., p. 440.
8. Intelligence from Kashmir, 30 Aug 1837, For. Pol. 20 Oct. 1837, No. 62.
9. Pearse, Hugh, op. cit., pp. 194-95.

warfare, the rebels were completely routed. Many of them were captured, and treated with a vengeance ; their hands and feet were severed by axes, while skins of Mali and Sabaz Ali, two of the close accomplices of Shams-ud-Din, were peeled off their bodies, and their heads were hung on gallows in a crossing as a warning to others. Hands were ultimately laid on the chief rebel as well, and his head was cut off.

It is said that Gulab Singh's own eldest son, Udham Singh, indicated his disapproval of these cruel punishments. But the father made his son "understand that if in this world of formation and decomposition, chastising judges and just kings did not inflict deserved punishment on the cruel and the violent who make oppression their pass word, the law and order of the world would become confused[10]".

In the same year, Gulab Singh got an opportunity of extending his influence on the side of Kashmir also. Zabardast Khan and Najab Khan were the chiefs of Muzaffarabad which commanded the entrance of the Baramulla Pass leading to the Valley of Kashmir. Both of them caused disturbance by oppressing the people. The zamindars also of the region were refractory. The Lahore Darbar or Government, therefore, wanted to chastise them, and deputed Gulab Singh for the purpose. Assisted by the Kashmir Governor, he soon restored peace in the area. Zabardast Khan fled away, but his son was cut down[11].

Trouble again arose in Kashmir in the spring of 1838, but on account of the conduct of the Lahore troops themselves this time. Led by its officers, commandants and Havaldars, a detachment of theirs left its place of duty "in a spirit of revolt and mischief without any order from the Maharaja". The rebels were ordered to go back, otherwise, they were told, "Raja Gulab Singh and Misr Sukh Raj would be asked to seize and plunder all their goods for their

10. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 161-62 ; Shahamat Ali, op. cit., pp. 136-37 ; Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., III, p. 383.

11. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., III, p. 344.

disobedience of royal orders[12]. But the troops, caring a pin for the royal orders, continued with their march. The two chiefs were, thereupon, sent against them.[13] While Gulab Singh made for Mankri, Misr Sukh Raj reached Bhimbar, and both succeeded in checking their advance and also disciplining them[14].

Not only in the case of Kashmir but on many other occasions also, Gulab Singh rendered very valuable services to the Lahore Darbar after he became Raja. In the preceding Chapter, we made a reference to Ranjit Singh's conquests of Multan, Mankera and Dera Ghazi Khan. In 1818,Peshawar also was invaded by the Maharaja's forces, and Yar Muhammad Khan, its Afghan governor, found salvation in becoming a Sikh tributary. But in 1823, Azim Khan, his elder brother and the ruler of Kabul, challenged Ranjit Singh's authority, and incited the tribal people for a holy war against him. Consequently, a large army under Sher Singh, a son of the Maharaja, supported by many generals, including Misr Dewan Chand, Hari Singh Nalwa, and Gulab Singh, and followed by the Maharaja himself, trooped off against him. In the battle which ensued at Naushera in March 1823, the Khalsa forces routed the Afghans, though at a great sacrifice. Yar Muhammad Khan was then confirmed in his appointment[15].

Peace in the frontier region, however, proved to be only transitory. In 1827, Sayed Ahmad, an Afghan, set himself up as a reformer, and called upon his followers to join him in a holy war against the Sikhs. To deal with his formidable insurrection, Ranjit Singh despatched a powereful force across the Attock. A detachment under Budh Singh Sindhanwalia, who was in charge of the frontier districts, moved to Akora, a few miles above Attock[16]. Gulab Singh, who was then at Jammu, was also ordered to proceed to the site of hostilities. Collecting his forces stationed

12. Ibid., p. 436.
13. Ibid., pp. 438-39.
14. Ibid., p. 449.
15. Latif, S.M, op. cit., pp. 428-31 ; Panikar, K.M, op. cit., pp. 34-35 ; Rehatsek, E, op. cit., p. 294.
16. Latif. S.M, op. cit., pp. 437-38.

at Jehlum under Dewan Amir Chand, he reached Peshawar by forced marches. Hari Singh Nalwa also joined him there. An attempt was then made by the tribesmen to halt their further advance by blasting off the bridge at Attock, but it was foiled. The fighting between the two sides, however, went on unabated for fifteen days. While the strength of the Khalsa forces was about eight thousand, their enemy is said to have numbered over one lakh. Thinking that God was always on the side of big battalions, many Sikh chiefs favoured a defensive strategy. But Gulab Singh was opposed to it. He pointed out that their safety lay in mobility. Ultimately, his counsel prevailed, and two engagements were fought, the second at Saidu, in which both the sides suffered heavy losses. But finally, the Khalsa forces carried the day[17]. Fortune undoubtedly favours the bold.

The power of Sayed Ahmad was, however, only curbed and not crushed, and, not long afterwards, he resumed his threatening posture. Even Dost Muhammad, who had become the ruler of Kabul on the death of Azim Khan in 1823, espoused his cause. The tribesmen became so bold that in 1829 they attacked, defeated, The tribesmen became so bold that in 1829 they attacked, defeated, and killed Yar Muhammad Khan. Thereupon, his brother, Sultan Muhammad Khan, was made the Governor of Pehawar. But in 1830, even he was defeated, and Peshawar occupied by Sayed Ahmad. Soon his agitation spread to Kashmir also.

Alarmed at these developments, Ranjit Singh decided to take the field in person. Many chiefs of note, including Gulab Singh, Suchet Singh, Hari Singh Nalwa and Sindhanwalia Sardars, were sent in advance. But before they reached Peshawar, the Sayed and his followers ran away[18].

In 1834, Ranjit Singh decided to annex Peshawar, and sent there a strong force under his grandson, Nau Nihal Singh, Hari Singh and General Ventura. Gulab Singh and Khushal Singh,

17. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 129-32.
18 Latif, S.M, op. cit., pp. 441-42 ; Cunningham, J.D, op. cit., pp. 170-71. Syed Ahmad was ultimately killed in May 1831 in an encounter with Prince Sher Singh's forces.

another chief, were asked to establish control over Tonk and Bannu[19]. After Peshawar was occupied, the Maharaja also pushed on in that direction. But then Dost Muhammad Khan left Jallalabad in order to dislodge the Sikhs. In the struggle which followed in May 1835, Gulab Singh opened the attack, but the result was indecisive. The two sides then entered into negotiations which also broke down. In the meantime, Dost Muhammad was deserted by his brother, Sultan Muhammad. This put so great a damper on the spirits of the former that he sought his safety in a retreat to Kabul[20].

Ranjit Singh then took some measures for the consolidation of his position at Peshawar. One of these was the construction of a new fort of a massive strength, and this work was done with great alacrity by Gulab Singh, Suchet Singh and Hari Singh. Subsequently, some more forts were also erected[21].

Before leaving Peshawar on May 23, 1835, the Maharaja appointed Prince Sher Singh its governor, Gulab Singh in charge of the revenue affairs, Lehna Singh Majithia to guard and protect the town and its gardens, and Avitabile and Henry Court to manage the military affairs[22]. In addition to his specific duties, Gulab Singh was asked to take part in every other matter also[23]. But hardly had Ranjit Singh departed when Gulab Singh suffered from an attack of paralysis. Immediately this information was conveyed to the Maharaja who sent back Dhian Singh and Faqir Imam-ud-Din to look after the ailing Raja[24]. Fortunately, Gulab Singh recovered soon, and returned to Jammu, handing over his charge to Avitabile, according to the instructions of the Maharaja[25].

The frontier then remained calm but only for about two years. Hari Singh had established a chain of forts, including one

19. Suri, Sohah Lal, op. cit., III, p. 198.
20. Ibid., pp. 230-33 ; Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 148-50.
21. Latif, S.M, op. cit., p. 471.
22. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., III, p. 236.
23. Ibid., p. 234.
24. Ibid., p. 237.
25. Latif, S.M, op. cit., p. 471.

at Jamrud which lay at the entrance to the Khaibar Pass. This gave Dost Muhammad the impression that the Sikhs were contemplating an invasion of Kabul also. In April 1837, therefore, he sent his son Muhammad Akbar Khan for the reduction of Jamrud. Hari Singh offered a heroic resistance, but could make no headway, and ultimately fell mortally wounded. A huge force was then ordered to flash off towards Peshawar[26]. But before the advance guard under Dhian Singh, Suchet Singh and some other chiefs, reached there, Muhammad Akbar got off to Kabul[27]. Two days after Gulab Singh reached Khairabad, opposite Attock, followed by the bulk of the Sikh army. When he was moving through the Gidar Gali Pass, he received from Dhian Singh instructions to cross the Kabul river, and establish his hold over the Yusufzai territory[28]. Emboldened by Muhammad Akbar's temporary success, the tribes of this area had become refractory and troublesome. Gulab Singh marched with a force consisting of three battalions of infantry, a thousand horse and twelve pieces of artillery. General Avitabile also accompanied him. But he was soon afterwards recalled to take charge of the affairs of Peshawar, and Gulab Singh was left alone to execute the job. The exertions of the latter were crowned with complete success, but these took him about six months' time. A number of Yusufzais were gunned down even though they were prepared to submit. According to F. Mackeson, a Biritish Military officer,

> Examples of severity were thought necessary, but the cruelties perpetrated by Raja Gulab Singh both in this and in other compaigns in which he has commanded have caused his name to be generally decried and execrated[29].

But the Raja also knew when and where to be soft and conciliatory. Many of the Yusufzai chiefs were, accordingly, won over by handsome treatment[30], and they became so loyal that later,

26. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit , III, pp. 351-55.
27. Ibid., p. 359
28. Pearse, Hugh, op. cit., pp. 192-94, Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., III, pp. 359, 361-63, Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 154-55.
29. Mackeson's Report, 24 Oct. 1837, For. Pol. 14 Feb. 1838, No. 44.
30. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., III, pp. 362-63.

when Dost Muhammad Khan once again asked them to make a stirr against the Sikhs, they simply turned a deaf ear[31].

Gulab Singh had, however, to leave the frontier somewhat earlier in order to deal with Shams-ud-Din who had kicked up dust in Poonch. But before leaving, he collected a tribute of repees twenty six thousand from the Yusufzais[32].

It was thus mainly owing to the energetic exertions of Gulab Singh and his brothers that Peshawar was saved, and the frontier region pacified in 1837.

But the most remakable, the *piece de resistance*, of Gulab Singh's military exploits was the conquest of Ladakh. We have already noted that when the Afghans had conquered Kashmir in 1752, the Ladakhis had recognized them as their overlord. In 1819, Kashmir had passed into the hands of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and it was then his turn to extract tribute from Ladakh[33].

Almost simultaneously, the British interest in Ladakh also grew. As a result of their victory in the Anglo-Nepalese war of 1814-16, they acquired some territory in the Western Himalayas, which included, besides Kumaon and Garhwal, Bushahir, with an area of 3,280 square miles ; and this brought their possessions in India contiguous to Ladakh and Western Tibet.

As is well-known, *Pashmina* (Pashm or shawl-wool) was the most lucrative article of trade in both Ladakh and Western Tibet. Used for the manufacture of the famous Kashmir shawls, the whole of it was, under treaty obligations, exported from Tibet to Ladakh, and thence to Kashmir. Obviously, any departure from this time old practice was bound to throw out of gear the economies of Ladakh and Kashmir. But this is what was actually attempted at by the British.

Soon after the acquisition of Bushair, they tried, by all possible means, to divert the shawl wool trade from Ladakh and

31. Ibid., p. 408.
32. Mackeson's Report, 24 Oct. 1837, For. Pol. 14 Feb. 1838, No. 44.
33. Datta, C.L, *Ladakh and Western Himalayan Politics*, 1973, pp. 81-82.

Tibet into British India[34]. William Moorcroft, the famous British traveller and East India Company's Agent in Central Asia, went to and stayed in Ladakh for about two years (1820-22). In May 1821, he even drew up a trade agreement on behalf of the British merchants, which allowed them to trade with Ladakh, and, through it, with the Chinese Western Turkistan. This was followed by a Ladakhi offer of allegiance to the British Government of India. But Ranjit Singh took exception to these activities of Moorcroft, and protested to the Governor-General of India. The Governor-General, thereupon, informed him that the traveller had acted without sanction, and that the Government of India had, no doubt, received but rejected an offer of allegiance from the Ladakhi ruler[35]. Thus was prevented any active interference by the British in Ladakh.

It may be noted here that for the British, this territory was then of little political importance as it "was not contiguous to Russia but rather to China and the hard pressed Ching Empire was not deemed much of a threat even by the nervous British Indian Government[36].

But where the British failed, Gulab Singh succeeded. In 1821, when he subjugated Kishtwar, his possessions also were brought adjacent to Ladakh, and, like the British, he also cast his covetous eyes on the commercial potentialities of Ladakh and Western Tibet. In the first instance, he tried to divert a part of the shawl wool trade from Ladakh onwards to the Panjab via Kishtwar and Jammu. Because of the Afghan oppression, many shawl weavers had moved out of Kashmir in the early years of the 19th century to establish themselves in Amritsar, Nurpur, Ludhiana and adjoining hills. The Lahore Government also gave them every encouragement with the result that the demand for shawls in the plains gradually expanded. The new industrial centres, however, preferred to get their supply through the short and cheaper route of Kishtwar rather than the circuitous and expensive

34. Ibid., pp. 91-92.
35. Ibid., pp. 94-102.
36. Huttenback, R.A, op. cit., p. 477

one of Kashmir. Hence, the action of Gulab Singh[37]. But the change posed a great threat to the shawl industry in Kashmir. Naturally, Mahan Singh, the Governor of Kashmir, complained to Ranjit Singh against Gulab Singh's measure. But the Maharaja took no concrete steps to set the things right[38].

Emboldened, Gulab Singh next formed a gandiose design of conquering Ladakh. The task was Herculean, but he set his heart upon it in view of certain important political considerations, besides the above mentioned economic ones. His ultitmate objective was to possess Kashmir[39], and its fulfilment would be rendered easier if this territory was encircled by the conquest of Ladakh. Yet another reason for the march on Ladakh is said to have been his wish to reach the neighbourhood of Nepal[40].

But before Gulab Singh actually gave effect to his designs, he confidentially consulted the British authorities in India. Far from opposing, the latter rather welcomed the idea as it had the prospect of leading to the same result as was sometime earlier desired by them, that is, upsetting the age old practice of exporting the shawl wool from both Ladakh and Western Tibet to Kashmir only. In the words of R.A. Huttenback,

> In fact, the possible Dogra invasion of this area was viewed with some enthusiasm by the Company, for it was hoped that as a consequence a large portion of the Tibetan trade would be diverted to its holdings[41].

The British, therefore, heartily gave a green signal to Gulab Singh[42].

The invasion was made through Kishtwar which commanded two routes to Ladakh. After its reduction in 1821, Gulab Singh had placed Kishtwar under the charge of his able officer, Zorawar

37. Datta, C.L, op. cit., pp. 93-94.
38. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., III, p. 213.
39. Huttenback, R.A, op cit., p. 479 ; Richmond's Memorandum, f. 25.
40. Wade to Macnaghten, 1 Mar. 1838, For. Pol. 8 Aug. 1838, No. 28; Charak, S S., *Indian Conquest of Himalayan Territories*, 1978, p. 74.
41. Huttenback, R A. op. cit., pp. 479-80 ; Hutchison and Vogel, op. cit., p. 134.
42. Panikar, K.M, op. cit., pp. 76-77.

Singh Kahluria[43], with the title of Wazir. The latter used the lofty mountains of the area to train his men in the high altitude warfare. In 1834, when he had added the last straw, he marched on Ladakh, declaring that anciently held by the Kishtwar chief, it must be restored[44]. With about 5,000 soldiers, he entered the area of Purig via the Maryum La or Bhot Khol Pass. There was no resistance at first. But a battle was fought at Sanku on August 16, 1834, in which the Ladakhis were made to kiss the dust. The Dogras then pushed on to Kartse which also was soon taken. Wisely were they forbidden to destroy crops during their march. This ensured them food supply, and also won the goodwill of the poor peasants. Yet another step which Zorawar Singh took was to follow a systematic policy of leaving small garrisons in every fort on the way.

From Kartse, he marched down the Suru river, and gave another defeat to the Ladakhis in the plains of Pashkyam. Sod was the next target, but it was so well defended that the assailants could gain no ground for about ten days. Ultimately, Mehta Basti Ram, an enterprising and dashing Colonel in the Dogra army, accompanied by five hundred men, led a vigorous attack, shattered the Ladakhi defences, and took possession of the fort within few hours.

At this stage, Zorawar Singh came to know of the presence at Leh of one Dr. Henderson. The Gyalpo, or the ruler of Ladakh, had spread the impression that the visitor was an envoy of the British, and had come with an offer of assistance. The Dogra general, therfore, suspended his further operations, and sought instructions from his master. Gulab Singh then wrote to Ranjit Singh, and the latter in turn to the British Political Agent at Ludhiana. Soon came the reply that Dr. Henderson had gone to Ladakh in violation of the government orders and that the Company had not even the slightest intention of stalling the Maharaja's plans of making conquests towards the north.

About three months were, however, taken up by these proceedings, which period the Ladakhis capitalized in making

43. Kahlur, also called Bilaspur, is situated in modern Himachal Pradesh.
44. Cunningham, J.D, op. cit., p. 181.

vigorous preparations for the defence. But when Zorawar Singh resumed his offensive, they did not exert much. A tame attempt to hold the enemy at Langkartse soon fizzled out, and the Dogras had but little fighting to do thereafter. Losing heart, Tsepal, the Gyalpo, came to Bazgo to settle terms with Zorawar Singh. Both of them went to Leh where the former was installed as a ruler, holding power from Raja Gulab Singh, and agreeing to pay an annual tribute of rupees twenty thousand[45].

The Henderson episode shows that Gulab Singh's invasion of Ladakh was not only in the knowledge but also had the blessings of Ranjit Singh. Allen rather emphatically says that it was the Maharaja who had deputed Gulab Singh to realise the tribute from the unwilling Gyalpo of Ladakh[46]. It is, therefore, difficult to agree with Bawa Satinder Singh when be says that "there is nothing to suggest that the Maharaja actually ordered Gulab Singh to embark on such a venture[47]". But many of the Maharaja's Sikh chiefs looked upon this achievement of the Raja with a jealous eye. The Governor of Kashmir had earlier taken an exception to the diversion of the shawl wool trade to Jammu. Now he instigated the Ladakhis to rise in revolt against Gulab Singh's authority, with the result that the whole Dogra garrison in Suru was put to the sword. Galvanized into action by this, Zorawar Singh reached the troubled area by forced marches, and quelled the rebellion ruthlessly.

In 1836, he had again to rush to Leh to deal with another uprising led by the Gyalpo, and supported by Mahan Singh. After putting it down, he deposed the old Gyalpo, and replaced him by Ngorub Stanzin, who had married the latter's sister. Finally, Leh was fortified, and garrisoned with a strong force[48].

45. Datta, C.L, op. cit., pp. 107-12 ; Charak, S.S., op. cit., pp. 75-81 ; Panikar, K.M, op. cit., pp. 76-78 ; Hugel, Baron Charles, op. cit., pp. 101-02.
46. Allen, op. cit., II, p. 256.
47. Satinder Singh, Bawa, *Jammu Fox*, Southern Illionis University Press, 1974, p. 25.
48. Datta, C.L, op. cit., pp. 112-14 ; Charak, S.S., op. cit., pp. 81-82.

After his deposition, Tsepal complained to the Chinese authorities. But, as the Chinese continued to receive the tribute regularly from Ngorub, they refused to pick a bone with him[49].

Leading another expedition, Zorawar Singh overran Zanskar and Paddar in 1836. Next, he proceeded to Leh, deposed Ngorub stanzen[50], who was accused of rebellion, and reinstated Tsepal at an enhanced tribute.

The conquest of Iskardu or Baltistan, also known as Little Tibet, was also then contemplated. Gulab Singh had a grouse against its ruler, Ahmad Shah. The latter had given shelter to some rebellious people from Ladakh, including its former Wazir. For sometime past, he had also been endeavouring to cultivate friendship with the British Government of India. But Gulab Singh wanted him to form an alliance with himself. He therefore, wrote him :

> I wish to form the bonds of friendship with you. There is no country so near to you as Ladakh, which is in my possession. Consequently, it is beneficial for the interests of both parties to be on good terms with each other and instead of interchanging presents with Captain Wade at Ludhiana, interchange them with me and I will send you the products of India or Ladakh and will take care of your interests—Ludhiana is very far off—you cannot command protection at all times from that quarter. Colonel Mian Singh, the Governor of Kashmir, who is submissive to my will, is equally incapable of benefitting you. In every way it is highly advisible that you should enter into friendly relations with me.

But Ahmad Shah turned down Gulab Singh's proposal. Just then broke out some dissensions in the former's family, and the latter decided to make capital out of these. A plan was,

49. Cunningham, J.D., op. cit., p. 182.
50. It is said that Gulab Singh had not approved of his Wazir's action in placing Ngorub Stanzin on the throne of Ladakh and, therefore, wanted him to depose the latter at the earliest opportunity.

accordingly, prepared to invade Iskardu[51] from the side of Dras. Though unwillingly, the Governor of Kashmir also consented to help Gulab Singh in this campaign[52]. But before the invasion was actually undertaken, Zorawar Singh received orders from Ranjit Singh to hold his hand back, for the Maharaja wished to settle the Iskardu affair peacefully, if possible[53], otherwise himself arrange an expedition against Ahmad Shah in collaboration with his enemy, the ruler of Gilgit[54].

Sometime later, Zorawar Singh appeared in the Lahore Court, offered presents to the Maharaja, narrated his adventures, and tickled his fancy by telling him that, if ordered, he would carry his arms to the borders of the Chinese empire[55]. On February 3, 1838, Dhian Singh also presented to Ranjit Singh some valuable presents and a tribute of rupees thirty thousand (Ladakhi currency), along with the agreement which Ngorub Stanzin had concluded with Zorawar Singh. A deputation sent by the new Gyalpo was also then received by the Maharaja who thus accorded recognition to Gulab Singh's conquest of Ladakh[56].

51. Extract of Intelligence from Kashmir, 18-22 Oct., 1836, For. Pol. 30 Jan., 1837, No. 28.

52. Wade to Macnaghten, 11 Oct. 1836, For. Pol. 31 Oct. 1836, No. 55.

53. Abstract of Intelligence from Kashmir, 18-22 Oct. 1836, For. Pol. 30 Jan. 1837, No. 28.

54. Wade to Macnaghten, 3 Oct., 1837, For. Pol. 20 Oct. 1837, No. 62; Abstract of Intelligence from Lahore, 3-17 Aug. 1837, For. Pol. 18 July, 1838, No. 52.

55. Latif, S.M. op. cit., p. 472; Wade to Macnaghten, 1 Mar. 1838, For .Pol. 8 Aug. 1838, No. 98

56. According to A. Cunningham (*Ladakh*, 1854, p. 332), the Dogra brothers had their eyes on Ladakh from a very early time. It was owing to this reason that the governors of Kashmir were "too frequently changed and too closely watched by the emissaries of the Jammu brothers, to be able to carry out such a design, even if they had formed it. For Raja Dhian Singh, who was omnipotent in the Sikh Darbar, was resolved that no one but his elder brother Raja Gulab Singh should obtain possession of Ladakh and Balti". Cunningham, therefore, opines that the invasion of these territories was deferred until Gulab Singh had consolidated his power in and around Kishtwar.

In 1839, trouble again arose in Ladakh when one Sukamir of Hembabs in Purig incited the people to show their fangs to the Dogras. It soon became wide-spread, and assumed the form of a popular rising. Thereupon, Zorawar Singh revisited Ladakh, devouring his way through a direct route via Zanskar, surprised and routed the rebels, and caught and publicly hanged their ring-leader. The country then gave no more trouble[57].

Thus we see that Gulab Singh reaped a good harvest of his military campaigns, and expanded the boundaries of the Jammu Raj far and wide. He held in jagir Jammu, Riasi, Kishtwar, Bhadarwah, Padar, Chineni, Akhnur, Dangli and Khanput in the hill region, and some other places in the plains, the total value of which was about nine lakhs of rupees[58]. He also held, as already noted, a number of localities on farms, the total income from which was double this amount. There was at his command an army of three infantry regiments, fifteen light artillery and forty heavy guns[59]. With all this, no wonder, Gulab Singh threw every other chief of the Lahore Darbar into the shade, and himself emerged as the foremost feudatory of Maharja Ranjit Singh. Through hardship to the stars.

Gulab Singh's brothers, Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh, also had come to the forefront by dint of hard labour, devoted service and judicious conduct. While Dhian Singh held in jagir the territories of Bhimbar, Poonch, Kotli and Sunach (total value rupees three lakhs and fifty thousand), Suchet Singh had got Mankot, Bhaddu, Bandralta and Samba (total value rupees two lakhs and sixty-five thousand). Upon Dhian Singh's son, Hira Singh, also had been bestowed the jagir of Jasrota (value rupees one lakh and twenty-five thousand). In addition, each one of them held some territory on farm. Dhian Singh had the further assignment of collecting town duties from Lahore and Amritsar[60].

The Jammu Rajas together contributed annually a sum of Rs. 5,970,000 to the Lahore treasury—a sum equivalent to 1/6th of

57. Datta, C.L, op. cit., pp. 114-17 : Charak, S.S., op. cit., pp. 82-88.
58. Cunningham, J.D., op. cit., p. 385.
59. Ibid., p. 388.
60. Ibid , pp. 384-86.

the total revenues of the State (Rs. 32,475,000)[61]. Their troops, besides the feudal levies, numbered not less than 25,000[62].

Little wonder, they came to form a very powerful faction in the Lahore Darbar. Describing their position in 1838, Capt. C.M. Wade, the British Political Agent at Ludhiana[63], wrote ;

> They held an immense tract of territory also in the plains, besides the monopoly of the salt mines, and by means of farming the transit duties, from the Sutlej to Peshawar, have their offiicers stationed in all the principal towns and exercise more or less of influence or interference in every department of the Government.[64]

Although Suchet Singh sometimes allied himself with the parties opposed to his brothers,[65] usually all of them worked in unison, and each one of them looked after the interests of the other. In the words of K.M. Panikar, all of them "consciously followed as a policy the celebrated saying of a French Marshal : 'He who hurts my brother hurts me'[66].

61. Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Anglo-Sikh Relations*, Hoshiarper, 1968, p. 207.
62. Barr, Lt. William, *Journal of a March from Delhi to Cabul*, Rep. 1970, p. 66 ; Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, 1967, p.26.
63. The British Military Post of Ludhiana served as a channel of their political and diplomatic relations with the Lahore Darbar from April 1809. But in 1810, the British converted the town into a Political Agency, and created the office of Agent to the Governor-General. Five years later, the Agent's office was shifted to Karnal, and from there to Ambala in 1822. The office in Ludhiana, during this period was placed under an Assistant to the Agent. Subsequently, however, the status of this office was raised, and its incharge was redesignated as Political Assistant in 1827, Political Agent in 1832, and then Agent to the Governor-General, North-West Frontier, with authority to deal with all political relations with the Lahore Darbar, the affairs of Panjab beyond the Sutlej and the Indus.
64. Wade to Macnaghten, 1 Jan. 1838, For. Pol., 14 Feb. 1838, No. 58.
65. Wade to Macnaghten, 13 Aug 1837, For. Pol. 4 Sept. 1837, No. 20.
66. Panikar, K.M, op. cit., p. 41.

But would their position remain as strong as this even after their patron was gone ? Ranjit Singh had not indeed been keeping good health since 1834, and many feared the disintegration of his kingdom under his successors. There are some scholars who believe that the Dogra brothers too visualized a dark future for the Panjab after the Maharaja's death, and were, therefore, preparing to carve out an independent principality comprising the hill territories around Jammu. A few of them even suggest that Dhian Singh was aiming to capture the Lahore kingdom itself.[65] The future of Gulab Singh and his family was certainly linked up with the history of the Panjab to which, therefore, we now turn in some detail.

CHAPTER FIVE

Succession Troubles in the Panjab and Gulab Singh

Maharaja Ranjit Singh had seven sons, born of different wives. Kharrak Singh, by Rani Raj Kour, was the eldest, and the Maharaja's choice to be his successor. Sher Singh was the second, but he asserted to have a superior claim to the throne on the ground that he was born of the Maharaja's first wedded wife, Mehtab Kour. Kharrak Singh, however, contended that the only legitimate son of his father was he and that the rest—Sher Singh, his twin brother Tara Singh, Kashmira Singh, Peshora Singh, Multana Singh and Dalip Singh—were of doubtful paternity.

Under the circumstances, the prospects of a peaceful succession, after Ranjit Singh's death, looked very bleak. Even if Kharrak Singh ascended the throne without any opposition, many doubted his ability to give an orderly government to the country. In his note of March 15, 1832, on the political situation in the Panjab, Smith Burnes, the British Assistant Resident at Cutch, said :

> The character of Kharrak Singh, Ranjit Singh's only son, who has attained his 30th year, can hold out no hope to the father of his being able to follow in his foot steps even at the remotest distance......It is believed by the people that Ranjit Singh might bequeath his government to any favourite with a hope of its continuing permanent but I cannot for my own part subscribe to the opinion. If Sher Singh does not secure the supremacy this kingdom will probably relapse into its former state of anarchy and small republics but in all likelihood and from reasons over which there will be no control, it will shortly form a portion of the extensive empire of British India.[1]

But some other British officials did not share Burnes' optimism about Sher Singh's competence also as an administrator. One of them was C.M. Wade, the Political Agent at Ludhiana. He said :

> Imbecile in character and degraded in intellect, it is a mistake to suppose that Sher Singh is better qualified to hold the reins of government. He is a man of dissolute and debauched habits and from a love of indolence despises the cares of business.[2]

There was then the danger of revolts also from numerous old chiefs who had suffered at the hands of the Maharaja.[3]

It was in the wake of these speculations that Ranjit Singh ended his days on June 27, 1839. Kharrak Singh then ascended the throne without any difficulty. This showed, though only immediately, that the prophets of doom were mistaken. Noverthless, the court of the new Maharaja came to be convulsed by divisions right from the beginning. Prominent among them were the Court party, the Princes, the Jammu or the Dogra brothers, and the

1. Note by Smith Burnes, 15 March. 1832, For. S.C. 21 May 1832, No. 10; See also Hugel, Baron Charles, op. cit., pp. 406-07; Lawrence, H.M.L., op. cit., II, pp. 340-41 ; Allen, op. cit., II, p. 200; Jacquemont, V, op. cit., p. 55; Auckland to Hobhouse (Private), 10 May, 1839 and 28 June 1839—Hasrat, Bikramjit, *The Panjab Papers*, 1970, pp. 30-31.
2. Wade to Macnaghten, 19 Feb. 1834, For. Pol. 19 Sept. 1836, No. 47.
3. Ibid.

Sindhanwalias. To these four factions was added, a little later, another, "an unmanagable army acknowledging no power but its own."[4]

While much has been said of the first three factions, about the Dogra brothers it is important to note further that their influence was mostly personal, and basically, therefore, not a very strong one, for they were practically strangers in the Panjab, without any ties of caste or race. Quite naturally, many Sikh chiefs resented their rise to power.[5] Being outsiders in the Panjab, C.M. Wade also had noted in 1838, there was "no natural sympathy between them and the Sikhs." Hence, they employed only their own hillmen to manage and defend their possessions. But, in the opinion of Wade, they were "the only people in the Panjab from the clashing of whose interests any serious trouble would be likely to arise." Speculating on their attitude, in the event of any crisis in the Panjab, the Political Agent had further said :

> the most probable part that they would take would be to abandon their possessions in the plains, unless they should succeed, before Ranjit Singh's demise, in acquiring the entire possessions of the country situated between the Jehlum and Indus recently possessed by the late Sardar Hari Singh, in which event it is possible that they would endeavour to establish a separate kindom between the Sikhs and Afghans, but its permanency is very improbable. Whatever their views may be in the plains, there is little doubt that they would attempt to seize Kashmir which they have now almost surrounded.

Much, however, also depended upon the attitude of the British Government of India as well as Ranjit Singh's successor. If the British intervened in support of the legitimate heir to the throne, and he sought the Jammu Raja's cooperation and confirmed their possessions, the latter were likely, believed Wade, to maintain the *status quo*. The Agent further noted, on the basis of a "good authority", that Gulab Singh was "anxious to open a separate

4. Pearse, Hugh, op. cit., p. xxxi.
5 Gorden, John, J.H, op. cit., p. 115; For Pol. 14 Feb. 1838, No. 58.

communication with the British Government for the integrity of his country in the hills." But there is no corroborative evidence to suggest this, nor was Wade himself prepared to place any trust in this report. He said :

> Hitherto they have shown no disposition to conciliate us and until their advice to their own chief and their actions are more in harmony with the views and wishes of our Government, I should doubt the sincerity of their professions though I should not of course neglect to receive with attention any overtures, that they might be induced to make.[6]

The Sindhanwalias were represented by Lehna Singh, Ajit Singh and Attar Singh. All of them were related to Kharrak Singh's wife, Chand Kour. Besides them, the Attariwalas and Majithias also held important positions in the Court. And all these families jointly represented the old Sikh nobility.

There were also among the coterie of self-seekers a small band of those who refused to align themselves with either party, and tried to serve the Darbar in their own way. Notable among this group were Aziz-ud-Din and Nur-ud-Din, popularly known as Faqir brothers, and Dina Nath, a Kashmiri Brahman. Aziz-ud-Din and Dina Nath had been looking after the departments of foreign affairs and revenue respectively since long.

Squabbling among these courtiers began, in fact, even while Ranjit Singh's body lay awaiting cremation. They rushed to the palace to demand from Kharrak Singh "by a solemn oath on the *Granth* that the grants respectively conferred on them by the late Maharaja should be continued to them." As the Crown Prince could then ill-afford to antagonize any important chief, much less the landed chiefs as a class, he immediately acquiesced in their demand.[7]

For the same reason, support of the Dogra faction also was secured. Dhian Singh is said to have twice or thrice attempted

6. Wade to Macnaghten, 1 Jan. 1838, For. Pol. 14 Feb. 1838, No. 58; See also For. S.C. 21 May 1832, No. 10.
7. Khushwant Singh, *A History*, II, p. 7; Cunningham, J.D., op. cit., p. 202.

to burn himself along with the body of Ranjit Singh. Not only was he, however, dissuaded from doing so, but also persuaded to exchange mutual pledges of confidence and good-will with Kharrak Singh[8].

There is absolutely no evidence to suggest that at this stage the Dogras had any intention of establishing their separate authority. Hence, they chose to stand by the legitimate successor of Ranjit Singh. It may, nevertheless, be mentioned here that earlier there was no love lost between them and Kharrak Singh. Not only had the latter grudged and feared the rise of the former, but, in order to secure his interests, had even tried to seek the British help. In a secret letter written in August 1836 to the Political Agent at Ludhiana, he had said :

> Considering their (the Dogras') great power and the means they had lately taken to prepare for any change of circumstances, by fortifying themselves in all their hill possessions and extending their authority around and beyond Kashmir, he (Kharrak Singh) could not but view with great alarm; that his object was to guard against their ambitious designs by securing, on whatever terms might be agreeable to the British Government, its continuance and support......

And from the tenor of C.M. Wade's letter of August 10,1836, to his Secretary, it appears that the British also were not averse to intervention if the circumstances so needed.[9]

Now, however, there remained immediate apprehensions only from the side of Sher Singh. Owing to his distrust of Kharrak Singh, he had kept himself away when his father was ailing. But after his father expired, he sent a confidential message to the British Agent "urging his superior merits on the attention of the Governor-General of India," and promised to reward any help by the cession of territory on the left bank of the Sutlej[10].

8. Osborne, W.G., *The Court and Camp of* Ranjit Singh, Rep. 1973, pp. 224-25; Allen, op. cit., II, p. 168; Latif, S.M., op. cit., pp. 494-95.
9. Pol. Agent to Secretary, 10 Aug. 1836, For. Pol. 19 Sept. 1836, No. 47.
10. M'Gregor, W.L., op. cit., p. ; see also Auckland to Hobhouse, (Private), 14 July 1839—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, pp. 31-32.

When the reports of these activities of Sher Singh reached Lahore, Dhian Singh lost no time in making a bid to heal the bridge between him and Kharrak Singh. The Prime Minister believed that any struggle for succession was certain to be exploited by the British to extend their influence over the Lahore Darbar. Lord Auckland, the Governor-General of India, had, in fact, once openly expressed his wish to Ranjit Singh to install British Resident at Lahore, but the latter had not obliged him. The British had, nevertheless, made their proximity felt through their cantonment in Ferozepur. Before 1835, they had recognised Ranjit Singh's suzerainty over this territory. But later their attitude underwent a change in view of their growing needs to possess places of strategic importance for the defence of their expanding empire, and their plan to hem in the kingdom of the Panjab by erecting a ring of forts all along it. The result was that when the ruler of Ferozepur died in 1835, without leaving any heir, they occupied it, and, three years later, established there a military cantonment.

Dhian Singh was now naturally highly apprehensive. Fortunately, however, there was no response from the British to the proposal of Sher Singh. The Governor-General made it clear that so far as the British were concerned, Kharrak Singh was the Maharaja of the Panjab. Sher Singh, therefore, returned to Lahore to cooperate with his brother.

And with this ended the factious struggle, and all began to work in harmony. But unfortunately, not long after, Kharrak Singh alienated the Dogras, and this set in motion an unending vicious circle of intrigue and counter-intrigue which kept the whole of the Panjab in constant agitation for quite some time.

On the very day of the formal ceremony of his investiture (September 1, 18:9), he forbade Dhian Singh to enter freely the royal *Zanana*, a concession extended to the Prime Minister since the time of Ranjit Singh for the speedy disposal of important State matters. Kharrak Singh, no doubt, tried to assure him that "by this act he did not intend to lessen his power, or that his interests as minister should suffer or be in the least prejudiced."[11] But what followed was an attempt to crop the Dogra's feathers further.

11. Smyth, G.C. op. cit., pp. 26-27; Latif, S.M., op. cit., p. 497.

Among the close associates of Kharrak Singh was one Chet Singh Bajwa. The wife of the latter was the niece of Mangal Singh whose sister, Ishar Kour, was one of the favourite wives of Kharrak Singh. It was this tenuous relationship which had helped Chet Singh to gain the Maharaja's confidence, otherwise there was nothing to recommend him but arrogance and sycophancy. As he was opposed to Dhian Singh, slowly and gradually be began to poison Kharrak Singh's ears against his Prime Minister. The matters, therefore, soon came to such a pass that one day the Maharaja socked Dhian Singh,[12] and gave his place to Chet Singh. Gulab Singh then happened to be in Lahore. He also was ordered to quit the city, and go back to Jammu immediately.[13]

Almost simultaneously, an occasion for offence was given to the Maharaja's son, Nau Nihal Singh, also. When Ranjit Singh had died, the Prince was away at Peshawar, and could not attend his funeral. Now, his father was to be formally installed as the Maharaja, and his heart was filled with a longing to attend this function. He, therefore, set off on a journey to Lahore. But apprehending some mischief from his son, Kharrak Singh did not wait for him, and, on the advice of Chet Singh, rushed through the coronation a day or two before the Prince was expected to arrive.[14] So great was the indignation of Nau Nihal Singh at this that he immediately retraced his steps to Peshawar.

Chet Singh thus became the most powerful man in the kingdom. At one stage, no doubt, Kharrak Singh asked Dhian Singh to "undertake the ministry under the promise of absolute powers," but the latter "declined so embarrasing a proposition, for that if, in fact, the Maharaja were to adhere to the terms of such an agreement, he, the minister, would soon find himself in the situation of sovereign, whereas he only desired to serve." What Dhian Singh wanted was his due authority, and elimination of Chet Singh's influence, for which, however, Kharrak Singh was not prepared.[15]

12. Court, Henry, *Sikhon De Raj Di Vithia*, Rep. 1970, p. 77; Latif, S.M., op. cit., p. 497 ; M'Gregor, W.L., op. cit., II. p. 5.
13. Khushwant Singh *A History*, II, p. 8.,
14. Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, 1967, pp. 14-15.
15. Clerk to Maddock, 9 May 1840, For. Sec. 1 June 1840, No. 52.

Emboldened by the success of his plans to humble his rivals, Chet Singh next hatched out a conspiracy to hasten Dhian Singh's end. Bhai Ram Singh, Bhai Govind Ram and Misser Beli Ram, all of whom had been among the most trusted counsellors of the late Maharaja,[16] and General Ventura and some other foreign officers of the Lahore army also lent him their active support in this design. And a little later, the plot thickened to such an extent that the murder of the whole Dogra family was decided upon. But then every thing misfired. Rash as Chet Singh was, he boomed out one day in the Darbar : "Dhian Singh, see what will become of you in twenty four hours."[17]

Dhian Singh, having been forewarned of the evil intentions of Chet Singh, was already forearmed. Sometime before, he had sent Gulab Singh poste-haste to bring Nau Nihal Singh from Peshawar. When the Prince arrived, a deputation consisting of Dhian Singh, the Sindhanwalia chiefs, Jamadar Khushal Singh and Lehna Singh Majithia waited upon him (October 7), and told him that unshaken although they were in their loyalty and devotion to Ranjit Singh's family, it was humiliating, and, therefore, impossible for them to carry out Chet Singh's orders. If the Prince could set the things right, well and good, otherwise they had made up their mind to resign.[18]

Nau Nihal Sihgh was at heart opposed to the Jammu Rajas. But the ascendency of Chet Singh over his father's mind induced him to ally with their faction. The Prince was further unhappy with his father on account of his leanings towards the British.[19] As already noted, Kharrak Singh had been in the past in secret communication with them.[20] Now, it was rumoured that he had formed a league with the British Government, and had consented to acknowledge their supremacy, to pay a tax of six annas (thirty-seven paise) per rupee, to disband the Sikh army, and to do away with the chiefs who were to be replaced by the British officers.[21]

16. Allen, op. cit., II, p. 210.
17. Pearse, Hugh, op. cit., p. 215; see also Gordon, J.H., op. cit., pp. 121-22.
18. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit. IV, p. 65.
19. Cunningham, J.D., op. cit., p. 202.
20. Supra, p. 71.
21. Latif, S.M., op. cit., p. 497.

In view of these considerations, not only Nau Nihal Singh but his mother, Chand Kaur, also decided with a will to act in concert with the anti-Chet Singh faction. Their plan was to ask the Maharaja to turn his favourite out, and to assassinate the latter and depose the former if their request was not accepted.

George Russel Clerk, who was holding the temporary charge of the Ludhiana Agency, then happened to be at Lahore. Significantly, all the Court factions consulted him also in the matter, and according to his report, the consensus was in favour of depriving the Maharaja and his favourite of their powers. Even Faqir Aziz-ud-Din, as yet a neutral man, was of the same opinion. And as regards the new set-up, a small group of men wanted Dhian Singh to seize power. But he did not favour this proposal. Clerk's point of view was that no arrangement could succeed without the active involvement of both Nau Nihal Singh and Dhian Singh.[22] Hence, he also approved of the idea of removing Chet Singh from power but not through violent means[23].

When all was thus set, Gulab Singh, Dhian Singh,[24] Suchet Singh and the Sindhanwalia chiefs, led by Nau Nihal Singh himself, forced their way into the private chamber of Kharrak Singh on October 8, 1839, after cutting down two persons and shooting another on the way, searched for Chet Singh, and put him to death. Many of his relations and followers too were instantly put to the sword. Kharrak Singh was then forced to retire, and Nau Nihal Singh was invested with the authority to carry on the state business in his father's name.

All the eyes were now turned towards the young Prince. He was just nineteen then, and the very image of his grand-father in features as well as diposition. Not surprisingly, therefore, the latter is said to have fondly anticipated that in his grandson the Sikhs would find a worthy successor. But unfortunately, this fond hope also was not destined to be fulfilled.

22. Clerk to Auckland, 19 Sept. 1839, For. Sec. 6 Nov. 1839, No. 24 A.
23. Auckland to Hobhouse, 25 Sept. 1839 ; Ibid, 15 Oct. 1839—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, pp. 32—33.
24. According to M'Gregor (II, p. 5), Dhian Singh was involved in this murder at the instigation of Prince Sher Singh.

As Nau Nihal Singh was brought to power with the blessings of the British, the Government of India immediately recognised his authority. But the new ruler soon put himself in opposition to the Dogra Rajas. He considered that their power had increased too much, and ought to be diminished. To begin with, he deprived Gulab Singh of several districts lying between the Jehlum and the Indus.[25] Next, he determined to terminate the latter's monoply of salt. These measures naturally offended Dhian Singh who, consequently, intended to break off with Nau Nihal Singh, and make an attempt at the restoration of Kharrak Singh's authority.[26] But the Prince not only frustrated his schemes with the help of the Sindhanwalias and the army, but also forced him to retire to Jammu[27] (January 20, 1840).

During Dhian Singh's absence from Lahore, many chiefs, particularly Bhai Ram Singh, Bhai Gobind Ram, Ajit Singh and Attar Singh Sindhanwalia, and Jamadar Khushal Singh, sought to widen the gulf between him and the Prince. But their counsel had little effect upon the latter. Nau Nihal Singh fully realised the value of Dhian Singh's services, and, therefore, tried to placate him. Soon after, he even deputed Bhai Ram Singh to bring Dhian Singh back to Lahore.[28]

The relations between Nau Nihal Singh and Dhian Singh then began to improve gradually. The former even sanctioned Gulab Singh's invasion of Iskardu or Baltistan.[29] We have already noted that in 1836-37 Gulab Singh had intended to subjugate this territory, but had to hold his hand back in view of Ranjit Singh's disapproval.[30] Now, in the beginning of 1840, he revived his plans, and, according to Clerk, Nau Nihal Singh gave him the green signal for the fear of "defection of that family."[31]

25. Auckland to Hobhouse, 21 Dec. 1839 ; Ibid., 15 Aug. 1840 – Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, pp. 34, 37-38.
26. Ibid, 21 Dec. 1839—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, p. 34.
27. Ibid, 15 Aug. 1840 ; Ibid, 18 Sept. 1840—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, pp. 37-38.
28. Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset*, p. 27.
29. Ibid, p. 20.
30. Supra, pp. 62-63.
31. Clerk to Torrans, 25 Aug. 1840, For. Sec. 1 March 1841, No. 126.

Luckily for Gulab Singh, dissensions in the house of the Balti ruler were still prevailing. Muhammad Shah was the eldest son of Ahmad Shah, but he was passed over in favour of a younger one in the matter of succession. Muhammad Shah then escaped to Kashmir, and sought assistance from its governor. The latter, however, advised him to turn to Zorawar Singh at Kishtwar. The Dogra General, when approached, collected a force of one thousand, and marched on Iskardu. As soon as he reached within three stages of Ladakh, Ahmad Shah met him with three thousand men, and, after a skirmish, carried off his rebellious son as a prisoner. But Zorawar Singh pursued and routed him in a battle on March 1. Ahmad Shah then took refuge in a fort which also was besieged by the Dogras. Many Baltis in the meantime came to tender their submission. After three days, Ahmed Shah also struck his colours. But he was deposed in favour of Muhammad Shah,[32] who agreed to pay a tribute of rupees seven thousand.

Emboldened by his success, Zorawar Singh claimed fealty from Gilgit also.[33] Yarkand, it is said, was his next objective. It so happened that at this time a quarrel arose between the Chinese Governor of Yarkand and some merchants from the Panjab over the opium trade. The former ordered his officials to seize opium worth about rupees eight or nine lakhs, which belonged to the latter, and destroy it openly.[34] Gulab Singh wanted to make use of this event for permission to invade Yarkand, an enterprize which his indomitable general had "long considered to be easy of accomplishment."

George Clerk also considered the Dogras quite capable of conquering Yarkand.[35] Being themselves mountaineers, he further said,

32. Agent to Maddock, 31 May, 1840, For. Sec. 1 March 1841, No. 127 ; Ibid, 26 April 1840, For. Sec. 18 May, 1840, No. 53.

33. Cunningham, J.D., op. cit., pp. 217-18.

34. Panjab Intelligence, 20 Dec. 1840, For. Sec. 25 Jan. 1841, No. 91 ; For. Sec. 25 Jan. 1841, No. 92.

35. Clerk to Maddock, 2 Jan. 1841, For. Sec. 25 Jan. 1841, No. 90 ; Ibid, 23 Sept. 1841, For. Sec. 18 Oct. 1841, No. 67.

they value hill territories far beyond more productive plains to account for the perseverance with which they push forward their conquests into rugged districts, the severity of whose climate alone proves fatal to numbers of their Sikh troops.[36]

F. Mackeson, a British military officer, was, however, of the view that the Dogras could never accomplish the conquest of Yarkand ; it was "mere vain boast" of theirs.[37] But if this "boast" was actually carried into effect, Clerk feared that as a consequence of it, the British relations with the Chinese, with whom they were already at war, would worsen. Hence, he proposed to approach the Lahore Darbar to put a veto on Gulab Singh's ambitious project.[38] There was yet another consideration also for this proposal. Gulab Singh's extension of authority in the direction of Yarkand was considered to be a threat to the "future peace and security" of the eastern borders of Shah Shuja's Afghan kidgdom.[39] Little wonder, the Lahore Darbar decided to forward the opium case to the British authorities.[40]

At Lahore, Nau Nihal Singh was prepared to oblige the Jammu Rajas up to a certain extent only. In July 1840, Gulab Singh was asked to relinquish his control over the Minawar District in the Jammu hills. This he did, but carried away lakhs of rupees from there, for which he was reprimanded. Vigilance over him in his own territories also was maintained. At the time of sanctioning the Iskardu expedition, the Prince had sent a large force under General Ventura and Ajit Singh Sindhanwalia, neither of whom bore goodwill towards the Dogra brothers, to enforce order in the hill states of Mandi and Kulu.[41] This force, stationed immediately to the north-east of Jammu, could be used, if need arose, to chastise Gulab Singh.[42] But not long after, there befell a catastrophe.

36. Clerk to Torrans, 25 Aug. 1840, For. Sec. 1 March 1841. No. 126.
37. Mackeson to Macnaghten, 14 Jan. 1841, For. Sec. 1 Feb. 1841, No. 68.
38. Clerk to Maddock, 2 Jan. 1841, For. Sec. 25 Jan. 1841, No. 90.
39. Clerk to Maddock, 23 Sept. 1841, For. Sec. 18 Oct. 1841, No. 67.
40. Panjab Intelligence, 20 Dec. 1840, For. Sec. 25 Jan. 1841, No. 91 ; Ibid., 25 Jan., 1841, No. 92.
41. The disorder in these territories is alleged to have been caused by the intrigues of Gulab Singh (Khushwant Singh, *A History*, II, p. 11).
42. Cunningham, J.D. op. cit., p. 207.

After losing power, Kharrak Singh had often been threatening to seek assistance for his restoration from the British. Once he even tried to run away to their side, but his attempt was foiled.[43] Disappointed, he took to heavy drinking and taking opium in large doses. Already his health was rapidly falling. The evil habits which he now contracted hastened his death which took place on November 5, 1840.[44] When he was cremated, two of his wives also mounted the pyre to commit Sati. And after the conclusion of his funeral rites, as Nau Nihal Singh and his courtiers were passing under the northern gate of the Hazuri Bagh, its arch suddenly caved in. Slabs of stones and masonry, consequently, tumbled down, injuring several persons, including Dhian Singh and Dina Nath. Udham Singh, the eldest son of Gulab Singh, died on the spot. Nau Nihal Singh also received head injuries, and succumbed to these a little later.[45] In the afternoon, his body also was taken to the spot where his father's ashes were still smouldering.

The Prince's sudden death stunned everyone. It left only one man who could now reasonably be placed on the vacant throne, and he was Sher Singh. The coustiers, therefore, with one voice admitted his claim, and Dhian Singh asked him to come to Lahore. There now appeared to be no hitch about the new succession. But the history of the Punjab was not destined to be so smooth. Rani Chand Kour sprang a surprise by staking her right to the throne. She asserted that a widow of her late son was expected to give birth to a heir, and demanded for herself the position of a regent during the pregnancy. According to Sohan Lal Suri, "some men liked this counsel and advice and some did not approve of the

43. Shahamat Ali, op. cit., p. 544.
44. It is, however, alleged by some that he was poisoned under the orders of Nau Nihal Singh and Dhian Singh.
45. It is said, but without justification, that the accident was preplanned by Dhian Singh. For detailed discussion, see Mahajan, Jagmohan, *Circumstances Leading to the Annexation of the Panjab*, 1949, pp. 17-18; Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset*, p. 29; Latif, S.M., op. cit., p. 501.

Dismissing this incident as simply an accident, S.M. Latif does not, however, rule out the hand of the followers of late Kharrak Singh and Chet Singh in arranging this plot "as they had robbed and cheated the imbecile Kharrak Singh in a most perfidious way, and the prince had already determined to bring them to book."

proposal and went to Mai Sahiba (Chand Kour) and spoke to her in such a manner in round about ways as to excite in her the flame of the fires of mischief and enmity. None of them prevented the white horse of her tongue from galloping full well in the field of loss and defeat (they freely talked in ways inimical to the interests of the state.)"

Under these circumstances, it was thought proper to seek the advice of Gulab Singh who was, therefore, immediately summoned from Jammu to Lahore. On arrival, he advocated the exercise of patience and caution in the settlement of the matter,[46] and, in the end, all conceded that the claim of Nau Nihal Singh's child was superior to that of Sher Singh. But no agreement could be reached among the prominent courtiers over the question who among Chand Kour and Sher Singh should head the government until the yet unborn child came of age. While the Rani's supporters included the chiefs of the Sindhanwalia family—Attar Singh, Lehna Singh and Ajit Singh—Bhai Ram Singh, Bhai Gobind Ram, Jamadar Khushal Singh and his nephew Tej Singh, Fateh Singh Man, Gulab Singh Povindia and Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din, Sher Singh was favoured by Raja Gulab Singh, Bhai Gurmukh Singh Granthi, Sham Singh Attariwala, Dhanna Singh Malwai, Fakir Aziz-ud-Din and his two brothers, besides senior European officers, including Ventura and Court.

Dhian Singh too was inclined towards Sher Singh as he thought that the times were not favourable for the country to be ruled over by a woman. But still he preferred to make an attempt to accommodate both the claimants by suggesting that while Chand Kour should occupy the position of a queen, Sher Singh be the chief adviser. The two gladly fell in with this proposal, and the crisis seemed to have been blown over. Only a few hours later, however, the Rani backed out.[47] Dhian Singh then came forward with some new compromising formulas. She could marry Sher Singh, or adopt his son, Pratap Singh. But she disdained any association with one whom she looked upon as illegitimate offspring of a dyer of clothes ; and instead of Sher Singh's son, she showed willingness

46. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., IV, p. 130.
47. Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset*, pp. 30-31.

to adopt Hira Singh. Dhian Singh "did his best to bring her to reason. He placed his turban at her feet, and implored her to accept the title of *queen dowager* with Sher Singh as the head of a Council of Regency. Chand Kaur tore up the proposal."[48] "Why should I not do," she said, "as Queen Victoria does in England ?" and threatened to demand help from the British.

To appease the lady, Dhian Singh drew out yet another scheme on November 27 with the unanimous consent of the courtiers. According to it, Sher Singh was to retire to his estate, leaving his minor son, Pratap Singh, to represent him on the Council of Regency till such time as Nau Nihal Singh's widow gave birth to her child. To the great relief of all, Chand Kaur accepted it and, consequently, assumed the office of the regent with four ministers—Dhian Singh, Attar Singh Sindhanwalia, Khushal Singh and Lehna Singh, to advise her[49].

But the green-eyed monster did not allow Dhian Singh's colleagues to cooperate with him. The working of the new scheme also, consequently, ran into difficulties from the very beginning. Khushal Singh and Tej Singh particularly put many hurdles in his way. Their main concern was to secure the command of the army, which was then in the hands of Dhian Singh, any they were prepared to do anything and everything in order to achieve this objective.[50] Pained at their attitude, according to Sohan Lal Suri, Dhian Singh said to himself that

> he must think of some device and plan of such a nature that, according to its intelligent working and respectable manner, he might be able to leave that place for Jammu, because it did not appeal any more to his heart to stay any longer in Lahore for, when every one of the Sirdars of the Council had become selfish for his own good, there was every possibility of defects and drawbacks creeping into the affairs of kingdom and king-

48. Khushwant Singh, *A History*, II, 15.
49. Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset*, p. 32.
50. Clerk to Maddock, Jan. 2, 1841, For. sec, 25 Jan., 1841, No 90 ; Clerk to Maddock, 21 Jan. 1841, For. Sec. Feb. 1, 1841, No. 68.

ship. He further reiterated that it was a well established and admitted fact and custom that whenever any party from among the various parties, and especially that consisting of fortunate Sirdars and well known chiefs, became split up with disunion, disagreement, jealousy and enmity, the transfer of kingship and kingdom takes place from one dynasty to another; while in union and unanimity and good relations the kingdoms and dominions of others also fell into their possessions[51].

One day, therefore, Dhian Singh requested the Regent to relieve him of his duties, and grant him leave to go to Jammu. But Chand Kaur turned his request down, and admonished the other members of her Council to "obey" Dhian Singh. The members, however had determined to set his authority at naught. According to them, any arrangement which gave him the whip hand was bound to "bring ruin on the government." Dhian Singh, therefore, repeated his request for leave, but the Regent again brushed it off. Considering his services indispensable, she was even "prepared to follow him wherever he might choose to go." Exorted once by her, the chiefs bound themselves in writing to act "with cordiality"[52], but, in practice, they refused to sing another song.

In sheer disgust, Dhian Singh abstained from attending his office for over a month, and occupied himself with hunting and sports. In the meanwhile, Chand Kaur also became cool towards him. Seeing the intrigues of his enemies thus succeeding, he determined to espouse the cause of Sher Singh. For the present, however, he sought permission to go to Jammu. This was readily granted. But before his departure, he secretly asked the Prince to hold himself in readiness, and urged his trusted army officers to join the latter when the call came[53].

The Prince also, on his part, girded up the lions. Till then, he had been living at Batala under a mortal fear, and was prepared, if need arose, either to take refuge in the British territory[54] or obtain their active assistance by agreeing to "write away half of the

51. Suri, Sohan Lal, op cit., IV., pp. 131-32.
52. Panjab intelligence, 20-25 Dec. 1840, Fgn. Sec. 25 Jan. 1841, No. 91; Clerk's Report—Auckland, 2 Jan., 1841, Hasrat, Bikramjit, *Papers*, p. 42.
53. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., IV, pp. 132-33 : Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset*, p. 33.
54. Maddock to Clerk, 28 Dec. 1840—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, p. 54.

Panjab" to them.[55] Now, he actually sent a word to the British Agent at Ludhiana, apprising him of his intentions, and stating that in return for any help he would reward them by a grant of all the Sikh possessions on the left bank of the Sutlej[56]. The Agent sent him a vague reply ; he told Sher Singh that

> having been allies for thirty-two years they (the British) wished to see a strong and stable government in the Panjab.

The Prince took this to mean that the British supported his claim[57].

At the capital, the administrative machinery soon went out of gear, and a feeling of confusion and dismay struck everyone. Chand Kaur tried her best to tackle the situation, but it appeared that without Dhian Singh no good was possible. Hence, she called him back. But Dhian Singh had already shifted his loyalties to Sher Singh. Iron was now hot, and the former decided to strike. He signalled Sher Singh to reach Lahore, and promised that he himself also would follow him.

Sher Singh complied, arrived in the vicinity of the capital on January 13, 1841, and encamped on the site of an old brick kiln called *Budhu Ka Awa*. But Dhian Singh had not as yet come. Sher Singh took this occasion by the forelock to secure power without the support of the Dogras, and deputed Jawala Singh, one of his principal officers, to negotiate with the Darbar troops, and win them over by all means. The Prince was already popular with the army, and, with little persuasion, many of its men and officers came running to him, paid their respects, and publicly proclaimed him as the sovereign of the Panjab[58].

But Chand Kaur also was not sitting tight. She won over Gulab Singh, who was then in Lahore, appointed him commander-in-chief, and charged him with the task of defending the city. Some other important chiefs, including Khushal Singh, Tej Singh and Attar Singh Sindhanwalia, also prepared to fight for her.

55. Auckland to Hobhouse, 7 Dec. 1840—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, p. 41.
56. M' Gregor, W.L., op. cit., II, p.8; Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset*, p. 33 ; Khushwant Singh, *A History*, II, p. 16.
57. Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset*, p. 33.
58. Latif, S.M., op. cit., p. 502 ; Smyth, G.C., op. cit., pp. 38-40.

Then began a race between the two sides to woo the army. "Love of gold", it is said, so much "corrupted the Khalsa sodiers that they abandoned any attempt at discrimination between right and wrong, and sold their blood to the highest bidder, sometimes avowing allegiance to each side in turn.[59]" But ultimately it was Sher Singh who got the better of Gulab Singh, for he dug into his purse more deeply than the latter. While Gulab Singh is said to have splashed about only rupees three lakhs in a single day, the expenditure of the former during the same period exceeded rupees five lakhs. Hence, by the evening of January 15, the troops owing allegiance to Sher Singh numbered as much as 26,000 infantry, 8,000 horse and 45 guns, whereas Gulab Singh was left with only 5,000 horse and foot.

Almost the whole of the Lahore army thus came to be arrayed against the other side which may be said to have represented the nobility. Although unmatched, yet Gulab Singh kept his spirits high, and in full flourish went from one post in the city to another, inspecting and distributing ammunition, pay and donations.[60] When some of the Rani's chief Sikh supporters did not appear to him steadfast in their loyalty, he tried to probe their mind. But all of them heartily swore by the *Granth Sahib* to be faithful, and Tej Singh was the loudest in his assertions[61].

That Gulab Singh should have chosen to be in a camp opposed to his brother, remains something of a mystery. Still more mysterious is the fact that Dhian Singh's own son, Hira Singh, also joined the opposite camp. Suchet Singh, however, sided with Dhian Singh. On his way to Jammu, the latter had met the former, and secured his promise to help Sher Singh[62].

Most of the scholars attribute this division among the Dogras to some deep-laid scheme of subtle policy. According to Allen,

> It may perhaps be traced to motive which, in troubled times, impelled different members of one family in England to join

59. Kohli. Sita Ram, *Sunset*, p. 34.
60. Clerk to Maddock, Jan. 18, 1841, For. Sec. Feb. 1, 1841, No. 67.
61. Pearse, Hugh, op. cit., pp. 231-32 ; Latif, S.M., op. cit. p. 503 ; Smyth, G.C., op. cit., pp. 44-45.
62. M' Gregor, W.L. op. cit., p. 8.

opposite political parties, namely a desire to preserve the family estates[63].

Sita Ram Kohli, however, says :

> It is probable that desiring to hold the administration together till Dhian Singh's return from Jammu, he (Gulab Singh) had found it necessary to support the Rani, and the rapid march of events found him unprepared for any considered re-alignment[64].

Whatever the facts, the two sides were now poised for a show-down. On the night of January 15, Sher Singh left his camp, and, within a short time and without striking a blow, became master of the city. His gold digging army then plundered the people, and induced more men to join it so that by 16th Sher Singh's forces came to number about 70,000.[65]

Chand Kaur and her supporters then shut themselves up in the Lahore fort.[66] But Khushal Singh and Tej Singh among them chose to stay out, and later deserted to Sher Singh.[67] About 1,200 Sikh soldiers inside the fort also showed signs of becoming perfidious. But they were held in check by the superior Dogra force of Gulab Singh.[68]

The whole city was in a state of uproar and commotion at this time. The Sikh soldiers broke open traders' shops in all the principal markets, and plundered them. The Chhatta Bazar was set on fire.[69]

On January 16, Sher Singh's whole army surrounded the fort on all sides. "The scene at this moment was of a strange and fearful character—the dense mass of fierce men heaving to and fro almost up to the walls of the fort like an angry sea beating against a rock."[70] The artillery was so large that even after the guns had

63. Allen, op. cit., p. 224 ; See also Payne, C.H, op. cit., p. 142.
64. Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset*, p. 35.
65. Latif, S.M., op. cit., pp. 503-04.
66. Clerk to Maddock, 19 Jan., 1841, For. Sec. Feb. 1, 1841, No. 65; Smyth, G.C., op. cit., pp. 42-43.
67. Smyth, G.C., op. cit., p. 46 ; Pearse, Hugh, op. cit., p. 234.
68. Smyth, G.C., op. cit., pp. 46-47.
69. Latif, S.M., op. cit., pp. 503-04.
70. Smyth, G.C., op. cit., pp. 47-48.

formed as it were one entire and connected battery round the fort, many of these, for want of room in the front rank, were placed in the rear or wherever space could be found ; and nearly half of the houses of the city were dismantled to procure wood for erecting batteries and works for the protection of guns.[71]

When all were ready, Sher Singh called upon Gulab Singh to surrender. But the latter, going up the ramparts above the Hazuri Gate of the fort, thundered—you surrender ;[72] and told him that "Rajput honour forbade a bloodless surrender."[73] Then followed a breathless pause, which was broken, after some time by a firing of 12 guns pointed at the Hazuri Gate. Down came the Gate, torn to shreds. Thirty-seven out of the thirty-nine guards inside also fell down, and to seize their guns a band of about 300 Akalis rushed forward. Just then the two surviving men inside the fort managed to fire, and in the twinkling of an eye were blown into the air about one hundred of the assailants ; and the remainder sought safety in flight, minutes later, leaving behind 300 dead and 100 wounded, besides about 50 prisoners taken by a sally of the Dogra troops. Sher Singh also fell back to his quarters, and never again came within a striking distance.

The fate of the besiegers' assault on the eastern gate also was similar—the first fire brought the gate down, and killed eleven Dogras, but the return fire quickly silenced the enemy battery, taking the life of all those attached to it.

Beaten in the first attempt, Sher Singh's army was regrouped, and soon it opened a heavy and general fire all round the fort. But the reply charge from the rampart was so well directed that in about an hour the artillery below was completely muffled, and there lay on the field about 146 guns with none but dead and wounded men and beasts around them. Sher Singh's men then tried an ingenious method to fight and escape annihilation. Seizing about 1,200 women from their houses, they roped up some of them to the wheels of artillery, and forced others to stand around the guns, knowing that the chivalrous Dogras would not

71. Latif, S.M., op. cit., p. 506.
72. Pearse, Hugh, op. cit., p. 235.
73. Grey, C. *European Adventurers of Northern India*, Rep. 1970, p. xiii, Appendix II.

fire down on them. But the besieged were skilled marksmen. They still resorted to firing, but fired very cautiously, and gunned down as many as 196 of the enemy artillerymen, whereas only 19 of the 1,200 women lost their lives.

Some other devices also of Sher Singh, both for defensive and offensive purposes, failed to achieve any appreciable measure of success. He, therefore, showed eagerness for negotiations.[74] But Gulab Singh had by now lost all faith in the Sikhs. Not a single Sikh chief of note had remained solid for him during this period of great trial and tribulation. Bhai Ram Singh, Jamadar Khushal Singh, Tej Singh, Lehna Singh Majithia, Sham Singh Attariwala, Ram Singh Chappa and Faqir Aziz-ud-Din, all of whom had sworn by their holy books, had changed their sides.[75] Hence, Gulab Singh asked Sher Singh to wait until the return of Dhian Singh.

There was another reason also which stood in the way of immediate talks. Rani Chand Kour was trying to secure the British help, and she wanted to be sure of their reaction before deciding upon the next move. On January 10, after consulting Bhai Ram Singh, Khushal Singh, Tej Singh, Hira Singh, the Faqir brothers and Dewan Dina Nath, she had sent Ajit Singh Sindhanwalia to Clerk at Ludhiana to convey him her willingness to accept a British Resident at Lahore, and be guided by him in forming a ministry. She had further offered, in return for the British help, to transfer to them either the province of Kashmir, or one-fourth of the annual revenues of the entire Panjab, and one year's revenues from Kashmir as a personal gift to the Agent. Regarding the quantum of British assistance, she had said that as Sikh army in Lahore was not more than 20,000, only eight battalions would suffice to take the frills out of it. But Clerk gave no reply to Ajit Singh.

Next, Bhai Ram Singh was deputed to induce the Political Agent through his *Munshi* or clerk, Harsaran Dass, then staying at Lahore. The Bhai told the *Munshi* that he had asked Sher

74. Smyth, G.C., op. cit., pp. 49-54; Latif, S.M. op. cit., pp. 504-05.
75. Clerk to Maddock, 19 Jan., 1841, For. Sec. Feb. 1, 1841, No. 65; Pearse, Hugh, op. cit., p. 236.

Singh to let the garrison in the Lahore Fort "come out with honour", but the Prince had said that the Rani and all her chiefs should die so that he was left with no rival. To the question whether he had been permitted by the Government of India to commit these atrocites, Ram Singh said, Sher Singh had replied that "Khalsa was *Malik* (or master) and that he himself had no choice." Ram Singh then repeated the Rani's offer, and said that the

> British should make their own arrangements in the Panjab; that such a Ministry would please the Maee as well as any other; that she should wish to have a Resident with one or two battalions at Lahore to protect her rights......

Urging strongly the acceptance of this offer by the British, Bhai Ram Singh added that it would afford them a grand opportunity of securing the Panjab by escheat as neither the Rani herself had a heir nor Nau Nihal Singh's widow was likely to bear a child. And in return, the Bhai wanted only one favour viz., the confirmation of the jagirs of the chiefs in perpetuity. He also told the Munshi that Chand Kour had, in fact, thought of asking for a British Resident long ago, but Dhian Singh had reined her back.[76]

There was, however, no positive response from the British to this offer of the Rani also. They, it seems, had made up their mind to support Sher Singh.

At last, Dhian Singh, accompanied by Suchet Singh, reached Shahdara towards the evening of January 18. Sher Singh sent two deputations to bring them to Lahore with full honour. When they entered the city the next day, Sher Singh "with bare feet and joined hands," implored forgiveness for whatever had come to pass in the past. Then followed negotiations between the warring sides, and hostilities ceased. Soon terms were also settled, according to which Chand Kaur renounced her claim to the throne, but was given the jagir of Kuddee Kudiali, adjoining the territory of Jammu on the side of Bhimbar and valued at rupees nine lakhs per annum; Gulab Singh and his followers were granted a safe conduct out of

76. Report of Harsaran Das, Jan. 17, 1841, For. Sec. Feb. 1, 1841, No. 68; Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset* pp. 35-36.

the fort on 20th; and Sher Singh was recognised as the Maharaja with Dhian Singh as his Wazir.

Soon after the hostilities ceased, began the work of collecting the dead; and the returns showed that on the side of Sher Singh the number of killed was 4,786 men, 610 horses and 320 bullocks, while the number of men killed on the side of Gulab Singh did not exceed 130. The dead were then either burnt or buried. Sher Singh's followers threw their wounded colleagues also in the flames so that they could harvest the little property which was found on the persons of the latter. In vain did the wounded cry for mercy; their entreaties merely elicited a derisive laughter, and it was asked if they were afraid to go to the heaven: "*Char Jao Bhai*! *Char Jao*; *Khauf Kis Galda*"—"Mount, brother, mount! What are you afraid of?"

Gulab Singh left Lahore for Jammu on January 23. But before his departure, he had a meeting with Sher Singh, and made him a present of the famous Koh-i-Noor which he had found in the treasury of the Lahore fort. Pleased at this, Sher Singh granted him twenty lakhs worth of villages west of Bhimbar.

A little before Rani Chand Kaur had chosen Gulab Singh to manage her estates and look after all other interests too. Sher Singh now gave recognition to his new assignment also. Gulab Singh, therefore, carried with him the Rani's valuables and some other treasure worth about rupees two millions for safe keeping at Jammu.[77]

77. Smyth, G.C., op. cit., pp. 54-60; Latif, S.M. op. cit., pp. 505-07; Pearse, Hugh, op. cit., pp. 237-38.

CHAPTER SIX

Gulab Singh and the Anglo-Afghan War

Sher Singh was formally installed as the Maharaja on January 27, 1841, and was acknowledged as such by all the chiefs except the Sindhanwalias, two of whom, Attar Singh and Ajit Singh, fled to the British territory across the Sutlej. Not long after, Sher Singh himself also came in close contact with the British.

We have already described the conquest of Peshawar by Ranjit Singh in 1834, and the futile attempts of Dost Muhammad of Afghanistan to recover it[1]. The British had not till then taken much interest in the Afghan affairs. In the days of Zaman Shah (1793-1800), no doubt, they were apprhensive of the repetition of Ahmad Shah Abdali's exploits in India, and the dread of a Franco-Russian invasion through Persia had driven them to seek friendly relations with the ruler of Afghanistan. But the disappearance of the French menace soon after, and the establishment of a strong kingdom by Ranjit Singh, which made the trans-Sutlej portion of

1. Supra, p. 54.

the Panjab a buffer state between Afghanistan and British India, had altered the situation. In the words of Dr S.S. Bal,

> Ranjit Singh's was an anti-Afghan Sikh State and for the British a useful buffer between the turbulent Afghans and their own possessions in India. It, in fact, guarded the Afghan frontier in which the British themselves had a vital interest. It served that purpose all the better because it had remained on friendly terms with the British after the Treaty of Lahore, signed in 1809 between C.T. Metcalfe and Ranjit Singh, which demarcated though imperfectly, the boundary between the then rising Sikh kingdom and the British[2].

In 1837-38, however, Persia attacked Herat at the instigation of Russia. Herat was the gate of India, and its occupation by the Persians would have amounted to the Russian control over the north-western passage to India. Although the Afghans repulsed the Persians, yet the British desired to form an alliance with the former as a measure of security against the Russian influence. Dost Muhammad also was willing to do so, but in return wanted British help in wresting Peshawar from the Sikhs. This condition was, however, in conflict with the British policy towards the Lahore kindom. Lord Auckland, the Governor-General of India, then took the fatal decision to depose Dost Muhammad, and restore Shah Shuja, the ex-rulers of Afghanistan who was then staying at Ludhiana. He declared that war would be waged

> with a view to the substitution of a friendly for a hostile power in..... Afghanistan, and to the establishment of a permanent barrier against schemes of aggression upon our north-west frontier.

Ranjit Singh also was asked to join this expedition. But he showed no enthusiasm in the beginning. He realised that the establishment of the British supremacy in Afghanistan would endanger his own kingdom which would then be hemmed in by them on the west, the south and the east. And Ranjit Singh's apprehensions about their intentions were not baseless. Sometime earlier, when he had wanted to annex Sindh, the British had forestalled him by concluding a commercial treaty with the Amirs of that territory. He then occupied Shikarpur, but had

2. Bal, S.S., *British Policy Towards the Paujab*, 1971, p. 1.

to vacate it also when pressure was brought to bear upon him by the British. In the case of Ferozepur also, as already noted[3], Ranjit Singh's wishes were frustrated. At least now, in the case of Afghanistan, he thought he would have his way, but soon discovered that he was again helpless. If he did not join the British and Shah Shuja, he was told, he would be left alone. But to be left alone was frought with dangers. Hence, he bent his knees, but at the same time made the British agree to the condition that the army of invasion would not pass through the Panjab, although it might return by way of the Khyber and Peshawar.

In April 1839, Shah Shuja was actually seated on the throne of Kabul, and Dost Muhammad was brought to India as a prisoner. A section of the British force was then left in Afghanistan for the protection of the new ruler, and the rest returned.

In November 1841, however, disaster overtook the British arms in Afghanistan. Provoked by their interference, the Afghans, led by Akbar Khan, son of Dost Muhammad, broke into violence at many places. Burnes and Macnaghten, two of the British officers, were murdered. The remaining prepared to withdraw, but their retreat became a rout, and the route, a massacre. Out of 16,000 men, one reached Jallalabad, 120 were taken prisoners, and the rest were cut down. A small garrison at Jallalabad also was besieged.

The British immediately equipped a force at Peshawar to retrieve the situation. Preparations were set on foot to send reinforcements from Ferozepur also, and to convey these hurriedly, passage through the Panjab, which was the shortest route, was essential. Millitary assistance also from the Lahore Darbar was desirable. But the national feeling in the Panjab was against any cooperation with the British. However, Sher Singh, when approached, struck a deal.

Although Chand Kaur had recognized him as the Maharaja, yet she entertained hopes of her restoration, and, for their realisation, was still trying to obtain help from the British. But

3. Supra, p. 72.

the British now agreed not to support her against Sher Singh in return for his help in Afghanistan[4]. Avitabile, the Sikh Governor of Peshawar, was, accordingly, asked to supply some pieces of artillery to the British, and also render any other assistance that they might need. Raja Gulab Singh also was ordered to proceed to the frontier in order to supervise all the arrangements on behalf of the Lahore Darbar.

The Raja was then busy in reducing to submission some insurgent tribes in the territory of Hazara, while his general, Zorawar Singh, was penetrating into Tibet.

Tibet had engaged Gulab Singh's attention when its wool, consequent upon the extension of the British frontiers in India to the Sutlej, had begun to find its way into the Indian cities by a route along that river, which passed through the British protected State of Bushair. It was this very result which the British had desired to achieve in the early twenties also, but had failed owing to the strong reaction of Ranjit Singh[5]. Now, however, the conditions had much altered. The Panjab Government was troubled by internal dissensions, and, therefore, unable to do much about it. But Gulab Singh took it upon himself to divert the Tibetan trade back to Kashmir through a bold and daring action by conquering Tibet itself ; and the man chosen to accomplish this formidable task was again his intrepid general, the conqueror of Ladakh. Before him, "no army from Hindustan had attacked Tibet. No Indian ruler had thought of conquering it and no Indian general accustomed to the heat of the plains had ever dared to face the heat of the Tibetan climate."[6]

With a small force of 5,000, Zorawar Singh advanced up the Indus in May 1841, and took Rudok and Garo. Next, he overran the district of Mansarover, wherein lay the source of the Indus and the Sutlej. From there, he marched towards Taklakote which also was taken without much difficulty. A garrison was then fixed close to the frontiers of Nepal and on the opposite side of the snowy range from the British post of Almora.

4. Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset*, p. 52 ; Banerjee, A.C. *Anglo-Sikh Relations*, 1949, p. 86.
5. Supra, pp. 57-58.
6. Panikar, K.M., op. cit., p. 80.

These spectacular victories of Gulab Singh's general naturally unnerved the British. The Nepal Government was already known to have entered into correspondence with Dhian Singh as well as the disaffected Sindhanwalia chiefs. A suspicion, therefore, grew that the object of the Dogra march upon Tibet was to bring the two Hindu kingdoms of Nepal and Lahore close to one another, "behind the screen of the Himalayas." And if this actually came about, the British feared that it might endanger the Kumaon hills which they had wrested from Nepal in 1816. There was then the prospect of losing the wool trade also with the Tibet. Yet another disturbing factor was the fact that the British were at that time engaged in the Opium War with China, and the Chinese Government was likely to think the Dogra offensive in Tibet had been instigated by them. This misunderstanding could jeopardize the chances of a satisfatory settlement between the two parties. The British further took the view that in any aggression committed by the Lahore Darbar, their own honour was involved as the Panjab had become of late "except in norm little more than a British dependency."[7] George Clerk, the British Agent, therefore, called upon the Lahore Government to ask Gulab Singh to give up his new conquests. Sher Singh had no guts to stand up to this pressure. A date was, accordingly, fixed (10th December, 1841) for the evacuation of Tibet by the Dogra troops, and Captain J·D. Cunningham was selected to go to Ladakh to look after the proceedings. In the meantime, however, the situation in Tibet took a dramatic turn.

The Tibetans encircled Zorawar's advanced posts, and cut off their supply lines. One force of the Tibetans, about 10,000 strong, marched from their capital, Lhasa ; another of almost equal strength was despatched via Garo ; while a division of 2,000 picked Chinese soldiers was kept in readiness in Yarkand. Thus encircled, and with his supply lines cut off, Zorawar Singh was left with no choice but to sue for peace. The Tibetans, however, spurned his offer. Desperate, Zorawar Singh moved out of Taklakote, and fought a battle on the banks of lake Mansarover, at a height of about 13,000 feet, which lasted from December 10 to 13. But his men were not sufficiently acclimatised to fight at such an altitude.

7. Cunningham to Clerk, 18 Sept. 1842, For. Sec. 19 Oct. 1842, No. 46.

Some of them were actually frozen to death, while others were benumbed to fire their matchlocks. In all about 4,000 of them lost their lives. The gallant Zorawar Singh, "perhaps the finest soldier that India produced in the nineteenth century," also fell on December 12.

During the following five months, the Lhasa army recovered all that it had lost earlier—Taklakote, Garo, Rudok and Iskardu, and threatened even Ladakh. To the Tibetan advance upon Ladakh, however, even the British were opposed. As we shall subsequently see, the latter were, at this time, seeking the Jammu Raja's assistance in their Afghan campaign, and could not, therefore, afford to antagonise him out and out. T.H. Maddock, Secretary to the Government of India, wrote to Clerk on March 21, 1842 :

> The defence of Ladakh by the Jammu Rajas against any attempt of the Chinese or Tibetan authorities to wrest it from their hands must be regarded by the British Government as a measure in itself perfectly legitimate and one to which this Government would wish every success and His Lordship in Council would wish the Jammu Rajas to be fully assured of this feeling in their favour[8].

On his part, Gulab Singh arranged for reinforcements from Jammu under the command of Wazir Ratnu and Dewan Hari Chand, and himself also reached Srinagar to look after the supplies. It was, however, not before the middle of 1842 that the reinforcements actually reached the scene of hostilities when the Tibetans retreated towards Garo. The Dogra advance then continued in the form of a pincer movement, and, in August, their advance party reached a spot whence it could easily retake the district of Garo. But at this stage, the British again intervened. They drew the Lahore Darbar's attention to the agreement reached with them in October 1841 for the evacuation of Tibet. The Dogra forces were, therefore, ordered, much against the wishes of Gulab Singh, to wind up their Lhasa expedition. But before leaving, Dewan Hari Chand and an agent of the Darbar signed a treaty with the Lhasa Government on September 17, according to which the boundaries of Ladakh and Lhasa were considered inviolable by both the

8. For. Sec. 21 Mar. 1842, No. 85.

parties, and the trade, particularly in wool and tea, was to pass through Ladakh, as in the past[9].

But, as already noted, the British themselves were driven into a corner at this time in Afghanistan, and were consequently in dire need of Gulab Singh's help. Up till now, however, they had not been kindly disposed towards him. His career of conquests had alarmed them, and at one time they had even considered a proposal to recognise "the separate authority of the Jammu Rajas" as a means of putting a check upon them. But this measure would have amounted to the reversal of the policy of maintaining the integrity of the Panjab, which the British had hitherto been following, and for this reversal they were as yet not prepared[10].

The attitude of the British towards Gulab Singh, however, had hardened further when the latter had extended his influence over Kashmir also. In April 1841, the Lahore troops stationed there had mutined, and even murdered their governor, Mian Singh. Maharaja Sher Singh had then ordered Gulab Singh to rush to Kashmir. The latter had obeyed, restored there the rule of law after several desperate engagements, and firmly established the authority of its new governor, Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din, who had thus become his protege.[11]

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But before his arrival, the position of the British had become desperate. Their first attempt to relieve Jallalabad, in the beginning of January 1842, did not pay, and General Pollock, who assumed the command of the British forces subsequently, was reluctant to make another until the arrival of reinforcements. The Lahore troops, consisting mostly of the Sikhs, were also frozen off. The Najib battalions among them, which consisted of the Muslims, even threatened to attack the retreating British force in the rear.[17] Pollock's reluctance was, however, soon overcome, and, to achieve similar results in the case of the Lahore troops, it was decided to send Capt. Henry Lawrence to prevail upon Gulab Singh. The

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Raja had by this time reached Attock. Emphasizing the need to conciliate him, Clerk first wrote to Maddock on December 8, 1841,

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Gulab Singh also had a great acumen to grasp clearly the strength of his position. It must have been within his knowledge that almost every important Sikh chief and ruler after Ranjit Singh's death had tried to form an alliance with the British. He also now decided to use the opportunity to secure for himself the gratitude and friendship of the British. It was almost an open secret that although Sher Singh had agreed to help the British, the feeling then prevailing in the Darbar, on the whole, was against them. When, therefore, Capt. Lawrence met Gulab Singh, the latter had no difficulty in impressing upon him that if he induced the Lahore troops to move on and cooperate with the British, the obligation would be to him and not to the Lahore Darbar.[20]

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In his negotiations with Gulab Singh, Henry Lawrence made good use of an American servant of the Raja, namely Alexander Gardiner (Grey, C., op., cit. p. 286). The American himself says that he carried messages from Gulab Singh to the British officers in Peshawar. He further says that not only was his master unwilling to help the British but also in constant communication with their enemies, the Afghans, (Pearse, Hugh, op. cit., pp. 241-43 ; Smyth, G.C. op. cit., pp. 62-64).

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> In return for such aid, it is open to Government to offer the Darbar and the Raja such pecuniary or territorial reward as

21. Lawrence to Clerk, 30 Jan. 1842, For. Sec., 21 March 1842, No. 60.

parties, and the trade, particularly in wool and tea, was to pass through Ladakh, as in the past[9].

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may suit our and their views and to pay to their troops the same *bhatta* paid to our own while employed in our service.

If this was not done, he concluded, it would be beter to dispense with the services of the Lahore troops altogether.[22]

Giving a more definite shape to his proposals a little later, Henry Lawrence, along with Mackeson, the British Political Agent at Peshawar, again recommended to Clerk to consider the transfer of Jallalabad, independent of the Lahore Darbar, to Gulab Singh. But with the Political Agent, this proposal did not find favour. Commenting on it, he wrote to Maddock :

> I do not think the expectations of Captain Mackeson and Lawrence are quite reasonable, or the almost indefinite extent of proposed rewards judicious, or the direct negotiations with the Jammu Rajah for their immediate aggrandizement honourable.

The proposed transfer of the territory directly to Gulab Singh, he further said,

> would be precipitating the decline of a power which it may soon be found expedient to prop both against Afghans and Jammooes[23].

Gulab Singh, therefore, left Attock without receiving any promise. He, however, marched tardily, taking full ten days from the Indus to Peshawar, a distance which, on many former occasions, he had covered in three days. Reaching Peshawar on February 14, he successfully tried to persuade the Sikh soldiers to give up their hostility to the British, and march onwards to the Khyber. He told them that it was in their own interest to lead the British safely across the Khyber ; that if they suffered a defeat at the hands of the Afghans, their huge treasure at Peshawar would fall into the hands of the Sikhs ; and if the British got the better of the Afghans, the Sikhs could claim the credit ; the Sikh would, therefore, have the best of both worlds[24].

22. Ibid, 31 Jan. 1842, For. Sec., 21 March 1842, No. 60.
23. Ibid., 7 Feb, 1842, For. Sec., 21 March 1842, No. 66 ; also Ibid, 10 Feb. 1842, For. Sec., 21 Mar 1842, No. 59.
24. Panikar, K.M., op. cit., p. 52.

But throughout Gulab Singh worked cautiously, and this fact rendered his conduct dubious in the eyes of the British officials. He was further suspected to be in league with the Afghans[25]. Hence, the British began to place little trust in him, though his aid was still held to be essential.

About two months before, as we have already noted, a great debacle had overtaken Gulab Singh's forces in Tibet, but he got its news only now, in the middle of February 1842. Naturally grieved and upset at the loss, he sent to Lawrence and Mackeson his Dewan, Jawala Sahai, with a request that the disaster should not be publicised as that might lead to a mutiny among his troops. The Dewan further told the British officers tbat his master was now anxious to go back to Kashmir in order to make preparations for the relief of Ladakh. He also tried to sell the idea that the Raja's presence in the frontier region would no longer be of much use as

> he had no confidence in the troops ; that some of the battalions now on their way to Peshawar were those against whom he had been engaged at Lahore ; that the Sikhs generally bore him ill-will ; that the army was of one mind, and the soldiers, Mussalman and Sikh, would stand by one another[26].

Exasperated at Gulab Singh's attitude, the British officers looked to an opportunity to thrash out the matter with him personally. This came their way on February 20 when he, in the company of some other chiefs of the Lahore Darbar, paid a formal visit to their camp. After receiving him with full courtesy and honour, they asked him bluntly what for had the Lahore army been sent to Peshawar, and what were the orders of the Lahore Darbar ?

Gulab Singh was not prepared for this question ; but he showed no nervousness either ; and how he handled the situation is thus described by the biographers of Henery Lawrence :

> Those whose lot it has been to parley with that Ulysses of the Hills can call up before them the sweet deference of attention, the guilless benevolence, the childlike simplicity, and the

25. Pearse, Hugh, op. cit., p. 242; see also Mackeson to Pollock, 14 Mar 1842, For. Sec. 28 Dec. 1842 No. 54.
26. Lawrence to Clerk, 17 Feb, 1842, For. Sec., 21 Mar, 1842, No. 74.

masterly prolixity of fiction, parenthesis and anecdote with which Rajah Gulab Singh stroked his silver beard while listening to the question and then charmingly consumed the hours in avoiding a reply. Much had he to say about the past, the loyalty of his brothers and himself to the empire of their great master Ranjit Singh, and the wickedness of those who attributed to them schemes of an independent sovereignty[27].

About the relations between the Sikhs, the British and Shah Shuja also Gulab Singh had to say a lot. The Sikhs, he said, had reaped no benefit from the restoration of Shah Shuja. The intentions of the Shah himself were questioned, and all the disasters that had befallen the British were attributed to his treachery. The Raja then ventured to suggest that Dost Muhammad, who was in the British custody, be made use of against Shah Shuja.

Lawrence and Mackeson tried at this stage to bring Gulab Singh back to the original topic. Shah Shuja's intentions, whether good or evil, they told him, were of little consequence at the moment ; their primary task now was the relief of the besieged. They, therefore "begged" him to inform them as to what were his plans and the orders of the Lahore Darbar with regard to this affair. Gulab Singh immediately produced a *Parwanah* which said that

> as the state of affairs in Afghanistan was much altered, the Sarkar has desired the Rajah to consult with General Pollock and Captain Mackeson and Lawrence, and to ask what objects the British Government had in view, what were proposed to effect and by what means, that the Rajah with the Lahore troops, including those under General Court and Raee Kesri Singh, had been sent to Peshawar to act in support of our (British) troops agreeably to the terms of the treaty, and that the Rajah would be guided in everything by our wishes and act according to our advice[28].

And with this terminated the meeting. The British authorities were now fully convinced that unless Gulab Singh was given some inducement, no substantial help from him would forthcome. And

27. Edwards and Merivale, *Life of Henry Lawrence*, 1873, p. 227.
28. Mackeson's note of 20 Feb. 1842, For. Sec. 21 March 1842, No. 78.

with the passage of time, his help appeared to be more and more valuable. From the tenor of Pollock's despatches from the forward areas, it was becoming increasingly clear that without the cordial cooperation of Gulab Singh, there was little hope of keeping the Khyber Pass open.[29]

But Gulab Singh's own heart was no longer in the Afghan affairs; he was more waded with worry about Ladakh which, as we have already noted[30], was at this time threatened by a Tibetan invasion. The measures for the defence of Ladakh were naturally suffering on account of the fact that not only Gulab Singh but a large body of his men also were locked up in Peshawar. But his departure at this juncture would cost the British dear. They, therefore, tried to stop him, and also proposed to assure him that if he now rendered them "real and effectual assistance," he might depend upon them for a similar support in case the security of Ladakh was endangerd.[31] Actually, however, as already noted, only Gulab Singh's right to the defence of Ladakh was confirmed.[32] Nevertheless, at the same time Clerk sent him an appreciative letter which said :

> We heard from the chiefs of our army how wisely you planned for the help of our troops and how kindly you rendered this to them ...The fruit of the long sown seed of friendship between us which was concealed for a long time has now come to light......you who are the flower of the garden of this world......the most delicious fruit of the tree of hope, we remember your troubles and difficulties in rendering help to our army ; we shall never forget that.[33]

The offer of Jallalabad also was almost simultaneously made ta Gulab Singh. Sometime earlier, this territory was proposed to be gifted away as a bribe to Sher Singh for securing his cooperation in the Afghan campaign, but the offer was later withdrawn as it appeared doubtful if he could retain the territory without keeping there a permanent garrison. Now it was felt that the grant of

29. W.W. Bird's note of 28 March 1842, For. Sec. 30 March, 1842, No. 2.
30. Supra, pp. 94-95.
31. W.W. Bird's note of 28 March 1842, For. Sec. 30 March 1842, No. 2.
32. Supra, p. 95.
33. Panikar, K.M., op. cit., p. 55.

Jallalabad to the Dogras would be more advantageous to the British[34] because the former and the Afghans, cherishing deep hatred towards each other, would never unite to the deteriment of the security of British India[35]. But in return for Jallalabad, Gulab Singh was required to give up Ladakh. This was, however, not acceptable to him. Ladakh lay in the vicinity of his own territories, and could be attacked neither by the British nor the Sikhs. Jallalabad was not so secure ; it was far away from his base, and could be held against an enemy at a huge cost[36]. Hence, he contented himself with the British friendship alone and stayed in the frontier area for sufficient time (up to the end of April) to help them in the occupation of Jallalabad and Kabul.

The British then proposed to decorate Gulab Singh in recognition of his services. But this proposal also fell through owing to Maharaja Sher Singh's disapproval, who told them that the Raja had already been rewarded with a medal by the Panjab Government.[37]

34. Maddock to Clerk, 26 May 1842, India Secret Proceedings Series of MS Records, 1 June 1842, No. 25; Governor-General to Secret Committee, 17 May 1842, Bengal and India Secret letters in India Office Library No. 10.
35. Clerk to Maddock, 10 Feb. 1842, For. Sec. 21 March 1842, No. 59.
36. Panikar, K.M., op. cit., p. 56: Banerjee, A.C., op. cit., pp. 87-88.
37. Satinder Singh Bawa, *The Jammu Fox*, 1974, Chapter V.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Panjab Politics and Schism in the Jammu Family

In the last Chapter, we noted that an important objective of Sher Singh's foreign policy was to strengthen his position at home. The fact is that his fate hung in the balance right from the beginning of his rule. In the first place, there was the possibility of Nau Nihal Singh's widow giving birth to a male child. Secondly, two of Rani Chand Kaur's staunch supporters, Attar Singh and his nephew, Ajit Singh Sindhanwalia, who had fled across the Sutlej in order to seek the British help for her, were still there. To rid himself of anxiety on these counts, Sher Singh could ultimately think only of murders. Hence, while in the case of the widow he caused miscarriage, the Rani was got assassinated (June 1842).[1]

1. To both, Nau Nihal Singh's widow and Rani Chand Kaur, Gulab Singh had suggested, after the siege of the Lahore Fort, to accompany him to Jammu, but they had declined this offer. (Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset*, pp. 42-44 ; Latif, S.M., op. cit., pp. 508-9 ; Grey, C. op. cit., Appendix II, p. xv)

   Some writers suspect that Dhian Singh also was involved in the murder of Chand Kaur.

But it was the army which proved most menacing. A little before Ranjit Singh's death, the strength of the army was about forty-six thousand. Though the salary of its men was often in arrears, yet they maintained a remarkable discipline, and idolised their sovereign. But this state of affairs materially changed under his successors. The army came to have an exaggerated notion of its importance when it played a significant role in placing Sher Singh on the throne. It then wanted him to redeem his promises of higher pay, which he had made before his success. But there was little money in the government treasury. The army, therefore, became restive. Already somewhat out of hand, it now began to wreck vengeance upon such of its officers and accountants who were suspected of having embezzled the government funds. The peaceful citizens of Lahore also were not spared. Their homes and shops were plundered, and, for eight to ten weeks, "the city was turned into a veritable hell." The trouble soon spread to the other parts of the kingdom also, and, in Kashmir, its governor, Mian Singh, was hacked to pieces.[2]

It was, however, through an organized way that the army acted. *Panchayats*, or the councils of five elders, were its chief organs. Each regiment had a separate Panchayat which was formed by election from among its own men. The members of a council, called *Panchas*, deliberated on the orders of the commanding officer, and then made their decisions known to the men. In order to keep up their influence with their colleagues, quite often they demanded increase in pay and other concessions which were unreasonable. Some of them even appointed deputies to work for them, and auctioned the posts of officers. The result was that the army soon lost its discipline and also direction by officers who had greater experience in military affairs.

2. Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset*, pp. 39-40 ; Steinbach, Lt. Col., *The Panjab*, Rep. 1970, pp. 30-32.

According to Steinbach, during the plunder of the city of Lahore, not less than two thousand persons were assassinated or perished, and these included all the government writers and servants who had in any way ever rendered themselves obnoxious to the army. Attempts were made on the life of some European officers also, but they had a narrow escape.

To quieten this army, Sher Singh is said to have distributed nearly ninety-five lakhs of rupees in about six months, and raised the pay of a soldier to rupees nine per month. But success still alluded him. There was then every liklihood of his flying to the British side as a fugitive and seeking their help. The British also were greatly exercised over this development in the Panjab. George Clerk wrote to the Governor-General that

> the effects of the late revolutions at Lahore, and principally among these, the outrages of the army, are producing consquences upon the Sutlej frontier which are quite incompatible with the general peace and security that ought to prevail on the border of a friendly state. The time seems to have arrived when it is incumbent on the British Government to require restoration of order by the head of the state, to threaten if he fails, to interfere to restore it, and be prepared to undertake to do it.[3]

As the disorder created by the Lahore army was likely to affect the affairs on the western borders also of the Panjab, Lord Auckland, the Governor-General of India, also held the view that the Government of India would have to intervene "whether the Maharaja seeks protection or interference or not."[4]

In desperation, Sher Singh himself applied for the British assistance in return for the cession of the Sikh territory on the north of the Sutlej and payment of forty lakhs of rupees in cash. There was an answering response from the Government of India. It even assembled a force of twelve thousand men to march on Lahore in order to disperse the Sikh army. For this service, the British, however, wanted the Maharaja to give away all the trans-Indus territories to the Afghans in addition to the territory and cash promised to themselves. These terms "shocked the Darbar, combined the court factions in favour of Sher Singh, but infuriated the army, which pointed at the Maharaja as a traitor to the Sikh Panth."[5] Dhian Singh, who was ever hostile to the British interference in the Panjab affairs, then advised the Maharaja to decline their offer diplomatically, and this was done.[6]

3. Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset*, p. 57.
4. Auckland to Clerk, 15 Feb. 1841—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, pp. 43-44.
5. Hasrat, Bikramajit, Anglo-Sikh Relations, 1968, pp. 201-5.
6. Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, p. 55.

A little later, Sher Singh and Dhian Singh themselves were able to restore some order among the army. The Maharaja was then free from all worries, and was expected to engage himself in serious business of the State. But unfortunately, he sought escape in the cup and company of courtesans.[7] Consequently, factious fighting in the Court, which had subsided for some time in the face of the army trouble, revived and became more and more acute with the passage of time.

The fresh impetus to the factious fighting was given when, in the middle of May 1841 (Chait 3, 1898 S), Sher Singh granted a sanad to Dhian Singh, called *Dharam Patra*. It praised in glowing terms the loyalty and services of all the Jammu Rajas, and laid down that, first, the Wazirship would rest with the Jammu family, generation after generation; secondly, all of their jagirs, military commands and farms were confirmed in perpetuity; and, thirdly, under no circumstance any of their soldiers was to be taken into service in the Lahore army.[8]

To the apponents of the Jammu Rajas, this action of the Maharaja was naturally most irritating. P.F. Mackeson was indeed so much infuriated that he wrote to Macnaghten:

> The Maharaja has bound himself hand and foot to these vagabonds. We cannot have a stronger proof than this of how entirely helpless he has become, he must be alone, without party, without friends, when he could bring himself take this step, for none so well as he, in the time of his father, knew that these Rajas took the best of the land. With exception to the crown jewels, everything that came into the country or was produced in it—the best horses, the best jewels, the shawls, were the share of these Rajas.

Mackeson, however, tried to console himself with the belief that Sher Singh might have a plan to use this decree "as a blind to the Rajas to bill them into confidence in order to get rid of them the more easily." But at the same time he thought that the

7. Khushwant Singh, *A History*, II, p. 19.
8. For. Sec. 17 May, 1841, No. 78.

Maharaja was incapable of realising such a high aim. "We must," therefore, he concluded, "write him down as a humble servant to Raja Dhian Singh."[9]

Although a recent biographer of Gulab Singh treats the contents of the *Dharam Patra* as relatively unimportant because it conferred no new favour on the Jammu Rajas, yet he says that

> its issuance was an impolitic step, for the Maharaja thereby legalized the extraordinary status of the Jammu Rajas in the Sikh kingdom. The net result was the recognition of a Dogra state within the Sikh state, Dogra army within the Sikh army. The decree, therefore, raised the prestige of Jammu and dealt another blow to the supremacy of Lahore.[10]

Whatever the significance of the *Dharam Patra*, the Dogra influence over the politics of the Panjab now definitely reached on its apex. But the highest branch is not the safest roost. So the danger to the Dogras' position also was now the greatest. Soon their enemies redoubled their efforts to bring about their ruin. To start with, they began to create ill-will and misunderstanding between the Maharaja and Wazir, and obtained so much success in this objective that the two had to renew to each other "the most sacred oaths of mutual friendship" on every second or third day.[11] Dhian Singh's rivals even alleged that he was now scheming to get himself crowned as the Maharaja of the Panjab.[12]

To make the matters worse, the Sindhanwalia chiefs also joined the Court soon after. So long as Rani Chand Kaur was alive, they continued to work for her restoration, and thereby looked to the rebuilding of their own fortunes. But her death completely wrecked their plans, and they became inclined to make peace with Sher Singh so that they could regain their status at Lahore, and challenge the supremacy of the Jammu Rajas.

By now Sher Singh also had begun to tire of Dhian Singh's control of affairs, and was looking around for some one to act as a

9. Mackeson to Macnaghten, 20 Apl. 1841, For. Sec. 17 May 1841, No. 79.
10. Satinder Singh, Bawa, op. cit., p. 52.
11. Clerk to Maddock, 8 Dec. 1841, For. Sec. 27 Dec. 1841, No. 34.
12. Ibid., 20 July 1841, For. Sec. 2 Aug. 1841, No. 101.

counterweight to him. Bhai Gurmukh Singh, the leader of the anti-Dogra faction in the Lahore Court, had, therefore, little difficulty in persuading the Maharaja to compose his differences with the Sindhanwalias, and agree to their recall from the British territory.[13] Clerk also interceded on their behalf, and, on his advice, they made a formal request to the Maharaja.[14] The intention of the British Political Agent, it may be said, was to provide a party or friends to Sher Singh who, to repeat the words of Mackeson, was at this time entirely helpless, alone, without party, without friends. The result was that at the end of 1842, Attar Singh and Lehna Singh were again welcomed at the Lahore Court with full honours.

The Sindhanwalias gradually gained so much ascendency over the Maharaja's mind that not even a finger moved before they were consulted upon. Soon he was led on to a primrose path also by Ajit Singh, with the result that the state business began to be completely neglected. "What the Panjab had prayed for," says Khushwant Singh, "was a dictator. What it got was a handsome and well-meaning dandy who knew more about French wines and perfumes than he did about statecraft."[15]

But the present state of affairs could not go on for long. Even if Dhian Singh was prepared to seal his lips, the other chiefs were not expected to put up with it. Hence, soon a delegation, comprising Lehna Singh Majithia, Lehna Singh Sindhanwalia, Faqir Aziz-ud-Din and Dhian Singh, waited upon the Maharaja, and made him an appeal to mend his ways. Sher Singh was, however, offended, and considered this move also an intrigue on the part of his Wazir. Henceforward, therefore, he began to ignore the latter[16], remove his friends and supporters from office, and replace them by men of the opposite party[17].

13. Richmond to Thompson, 5 Sept. 1843, For. Sec. 23 March, 1844, No. 455.
14. Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset*, pp. 61-62.
15. Khushwant Singh, *A History*, II, p. 19 ; see also Steinbach, op. cit., p. 33.
16. Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset*, pp. 62-63.
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As even a worm turns, Dhian Singh took recourse to his customary mode of showing his displeasure by absenting himself from the Darbar and going to Jammu sometime in June 1843. Sher Singh, however, commanded him to return, explain his proceedings for the last five years, and render accounts, failing which, he was warned, General Ventura and his army would be sent to bring him back. Dhian Singh yielded to this call, on the advice of Gulab Singh, and, on his return, explained to the Maharaja that he had to visit Jammu in order to see his elder brother who was ailing, and also to attend the marriage of the latter's son, Mian Ranbir Singh. Regarding his accounts, he assured the Maharaja that this would be rendered soon. A soft answer turns away the wrath. So, the latter was soon in a receptive mood. The Wazir, availing of this opportunity, further informed him that some of the chiefs, simply out of jealousy, were bent upon creating a wedge between them. The Maharaja should, therefore, be careful, and attend to his duties seriously in his own interest as well as that of the State. The former was pleased to hear these words, and assured his Wazir of his full cooperation and protection[18].

Thus were patched up the differences between Sher Singh and Dhian Singh. But this patch up was only apparent, and "a few moments under the excitement of passion and of wine" were likely to rekindle the flame of discord between them[19].

Unfortunately, the men who wanted this to happen were also not wanting, and chief among them was Bhai Gurmukh Singh who was now aspiring to fill the post of Wazir[20]. He told the Maharaja that the officers of the army were in secret correpondence with Dhian Singh and Gulab Singh, and that all of them were mediating some mischief. The Maharaja's blood was at once up. Then and there he determined to punish these officers by setting their own men against them.

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It was through these and such other measures, according to Richmond, who had now replaced George Clerk at Ludhiana, that Sher Singh tried to reduce the authority of the Jmmu Rajas, which they, and especially Dhian Singh, had been "beneficially" exercising since long. The Political Agent apprehended that the more violent partisans of the Maharaja might next try even to take the lives of both Gulab Singh and Dhian Singh by exciting a commotion in the army or some other less scrupulous means. But this task, believed Richmond, was too formidable for them as they did not have among them "any man of commanding genius" whose measures were "marked by that originality and boldness which would go far to ensure success". Moreover, the army, upon which they intended to depend, was inclined towards Dhian Singh[22].

The Wazir also at this stage settled the line of policy he was to follow under the circumstances. At a Darbar, on August 31, 1843,

21. Item of intelligence from Lahore, 31 Aug. 1843, For. Sec. 23 March 1844, No. 457; see also Allen, op. cit., p. 270.
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he announced that he had sent for Prince Dalip Singh from Jammu, who had now arrived at Lahore, and proposed that the Maharaja should order a salute to be fired at this occasion[23].

Dalip Singh, then five or six years of age, was a reputed but little known son of Ranjit Singh by Rani Jind Kaur. Popularly known as Jindan, she, along with her son, had for sometime been staying at Jammu[24]. Sher Singh desired that the Prince should not be introduced to the Darbar. Hence, he intended to place him under the care of his own men. But Dhian Singh set himself against this proposal. Exasperated, Sher Singh called Gulab Singh to account for having sent the Prince from Jammu without his prior permission. The issue being a sensitive one, Gulab Singh decided to go to Lahore, and clarify his position personally[25].

In the meantime, Dhian Singh began to look up to Dalip Singh as befitted a heir to the throne. Sher Singh's feathers were naturally further ruffled,[26] and when Gulab Singh put in his appearance before him on September 9, he asked him as well as Dhian Singh what they were mediating. The Jammu Rajas, however, swore by placing their hands upon his head that they were and would ever be his good servants[27].

But on September 15, the history of the Panjab again took a violent turn. First Sher Singh and then Dhian Singh were murdered in cold blood. The accounts of these horrible transactions are, however, so conflicting that to construct a consistent narrative out of these is nothing short of squaring the circle. According to one version, Dhian Singh conspired with the Sindhanwalia chiefs in order to bring about the destruction of his master ; another says that Sher Singh incited and provoked the Sindhanwalias to do away with his own Wazir ; the third opinion is that the chief architects of these gruesome deeds were the Sindhanwalias themselves. It is said that they exploited the misundertanding between Sher Singh

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and Dhian Singh in order to get rid of the both and themselves become the rulers of the Panjab Richmond had, in fact, predicted only a couple of days before that they would be loyal and devoted neither to the Maharaja nor his Wazir. Their union with Sher Singh, he had written to his Secretary on September 5, "would dissolve after their first success—should they be able to drive the Jammu Rajas from the plains and to confine them to the Hills."[28]

The details of the murders are also confusing. There are, however, no two opinions about the fact that the Sindhanwalias played the leading role in whatever happened. They belonged to a collateral branch of Ranjit Singh's family, and all the authorities agree that they cherished a deep-rooted and secret enmity towards Sher Singh whom they considered an upstart and a usurper. After their rehabilitation at Lahore, a contest for power between them and Sher Singh had, therefore, become inevitable.

Stripping the events of all controversial details, this is how it all happened. On the fateful day, Sher Singh was induced by Ajit Singh to take salute at a march-past, and inspect his troops. After this had taken place, the former came up to the platform where the Maharaja was sitting, and presented him a gun. As the latter stretched out his hands to receive it, Ajit Singh pressed the trigger, shot him dead, and severed his head. Subsequently, a number of the Maharaja's attendants also were either shot or cut down. Lehna Singh made for Sher Singh's son, Pratap Singh, a lad of twelve years. The Prince began to shake in his shoes. Throwing himself at the feet of the Sardar, he implored forgiveness, and said. "Spare my life, for God's sake, oh ! uncle, I will serve as a menial for removing the dung of your horses." The uncle replied by chopping off his head, while the followers of the former made a mincemeat of his body[29].

The murderers then proceeded towards the city fort, and Dhian Singh also was asked to reach there. The Wazir fell into their trap, and came to the fort only to be shot dead. His body

28. For. Sec. 23 March 1844, No. 455.
29. Latif, S.M., op. cit., p. 514.

also was hacked to pieces. According to a report, Ajit Singh then tried to lay his violent hands on Prince Dalip Singh also, but the latter was saved by the Gorkha regiment quartered in the fort[30].

With the death of Dhian Singh, stability in the Lahore kingdom received a shattering blow, for there was none who could replace him. The Dogra influence over the Darbar also suffered a severe jolt, and might have been wiped out altogether but for the bold and timely action of Hira Singh. As soon as the news of this incident reached him and Suchet Singh, both of them resolved to avenge the Sindhanwalias. According to one historian,

> The issue to be settled was whether the Sindhanwalias or the Dogras were to wield power at the Sikh Court. Dhian Singh had held it for nearly a decade and more than once thwarted opponents who had tried to wrest it from his grasp. If feeling against Dogra dominance had been a reality, the opportunity now offered, for both Sikh and non-Sikh members of the nobility to close their ranks against the aliens. Nothing of the kind happened; on the contrary, the Khalsa army lent its full support to the Dogras, Hira Singh and Suchet Singh, against the Sindhanwalias.[31]

Assembling the Lahore troops at Budho-ka-Awa, Hira Singh cast his sword before them, and bared his neck. The sword, he told them, had taken his father's life, and he was now forlorn, friendless and fatherless, and looked to the Khalsa for help and protection. If they did not wish to extend this, let them remove him as well from life with the sword.

This appeal won him the hearts of the troops. He then told them that it was owing to the British influence that Sher Singh had restored the Sindhanwalias to their position and privileges at the court ; that the hand of the British was clearly discernable in all the plots, intrigues and assassinations which had recently taken place ; and that to allow the Sindhanwalias to remain in power would amount to gifting away the Panjab to these aliens. A simultaneous promise of a substantial increase in pay produced a miraculous effect. "In their frenzied zeal, half-naked and half-

30. For. Sec. 23 March 1844, No. 480.
31. Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset*, p. 67.

armed soldiers, scorned the idea of waiting till morning, and in their impatient haste, they left their half-cooked meals, and got ready for the march within this hour."

The Sindhanwalias, along with their supporters, were consequently, besieged in the Lahore fort. On September 20, the fort was breached, and the besiegers rushed in to seize their prey. The heads of Ajit Singh and Lehna Singh soon fell, and were brought to Hira Singh as trophies. Attar Singh was able to save his bacon, and again took flight to the British territory. The fort was then indiscriminately plundered, and all kinds of outrages were committed on the city people too. The merchants deserted their shops to save their lives, while others buried their valuables underground ; whatever remained unprotected, was pillaged by the soldiery. If anybody made even the slightest show of resistance, he was forthwith despatched. Even women were not spared, and quite a few of them lost their noses.[32]

Some time later, all the relatives and friends of the Sindhanwalia chiefs, who then happened to be at the capital and had taken part in this struggle, were brought to the presence of Hira Singh, and got rid of mercilessly.

The revenge taken, the bodies of the late Maharaja and his Minister were cremated. The latter's wife had waited for two days for the head of Ajit Singh, his murderer. It was now placed at her feet. Voicing her satisfaction, she is then said to have told Hira Singh : "I will tell your dear father that you acted as a brave and dutiful son." Later, she and twelve or thirteen women of Dhian Singh's house committed Sati.[33]

32. Latif, S.M., op. cit., p. 518.

33. Latif, S.M., op. cit., p. 518 ; Smyth, G.C., op. cit., p. 85.
Allen, however, says that eighteen women committed Sati (p. 282). But according to an intelligence report of September 16 from Lahore, only eight ascended the funeral pyre there, and the dress, which Dhian Singh was wearing at the time of his death, was sent to Jammu so that some other women of his family also could consume themselves with it. (For. Sec. 23 March 1844, No. 478).

Next, Dalip Singh was proclaimed as the Maharaja, and Hira Singh asked the army, in a general meeting, to appoint a Wazir, According to G.C. Smyth,

> For himself, he said, he was unwilling to undertake the office, assigning as his reason that the enemies of himself and his family would impede and obstruct his administration. Nothing but a solemn guarantee on the part of the troops of their zealous and constant attachment to him and obedience to his orders, would induce him, he said, to accept an office so dangerous and unenviable. This declaration had its desired and expected effect. The officers and the deputies at once and unanimously declared that he and he alone should be the Minister of their choice.[34]

Finally, the troops received an increment of rupees two and a half in their pay, besides a gratuity of one month's salary as a recompense for their services.

Everything then looked settled and calm. But this calm, in the words of Ventura, an European General of the Lahore army itself, was "deceitful". Writing in a confidential letter to the Governor-General of India on September 28, he said :

> The Panjab is on a volcano of which an impending eruption is inevitable. Anarchy glides into the army and will increase daily. The treasure vanishes in winning over some and in satisfying others...I foresee then evil upon evil, and not only as a European but from philanthropy, earnestly desiring the welfare of the Sikh nation; the only remedy I see for these evils is the protection of a government strong, liberal, bringing with it civilization, which can snatch the country at once from despotism and anarchy.[35]

In this confused state of affairs, the British authorities visualised the possibility of yet another development. Richmond thought that in view of their common apprehensions of Gulab Singh, the Afghans and the British, the various factions of the

34. Smyth, G.C., op. cit., pp. 88-89 ; see also Latif, S.M., op. cit., p. 520.
35. For. Sec. 23 March 1844, No. 494.

Sikhs might compose their mutual differences and combine to compel Hira Singh to retire to Jammu.[36] Sharing these views, Ellenborough, the Governor-General of India, further observed that :

> The tendency of these events is to produce a separation between the government of hills and that of the plains, the Sikhs retaining the plains, and the Rajpoots under Gulab Singh and Hira Singh the hills.[37]

The immediate threat to Hira Singh's position, however, came from three powerful rivals—Jawahar Singh, the brother of Rani Jindan, who considered himself the natural guardian of his nephew and the Maharaja ; Attar Singh, the last of the Sindhanwalias, who was burning with the feelings of revenge for the death of his brothers; and his own uncle, Suchet Singh, who, prompted more by jealousy than anything else, was determined to supplant his precocious nephew.

Hira Singh, then just twenty-five, tried to grapple with the situation as best as he could. He also asked Gulab Singh to come to Lahore with some force, if permitted by the circumstances.[38] The circumstances, however, required the latter's presence more urgently in his hill possessions where, after Dhian Singh's death, their former rulers were likely to assume a threatening posture. But Richmond and some other British officials believed that Gulab Singh was apprehensive of the uncontrollable army of Lahore,[39] and, therefore, holding back "till he was fully satisfied that the troops were reduced to proper discipline and obedience, and firmly attached to the cause of his nephew, which was that of himself

36. Richmond to Johnson, 16 Oct., 1843, For. Sec. 23 March 1844, No. 519.
37. Ellenborough to Queen, 20 Oct. 1843—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, p.66.
38. Intelligence Report, 18 Sept. 1843, For. Sec. 23 March 1844, No. 481.
39. Richmond to Thompson, 25 Sept. 1843, For. Sec. 23 March 1844, No. 485 ; Ibid., 2 Oct. 1843, For. Sec. 23 March 1844, No. 492.

and all the Dogra faction."[40] Whether the Jammu Raja had this consideration also in view or not, certainly he was not the man to act in haste. Hence, he took his own time and reached Lahore as late as 10th of November.

At the capital, Gulab Singh first of all condoled with Hira Singh on his father's demise. Next, he endeavoured to fraternize with the chiefs and the army. He praised the determination and manly courage which they had shown in punishing the murderers, and also thanked the Khalsaji for having elevated Hira Singh to the Wazirship and shown himself and his family numerous favours.

But some of the chiefs, prominent among whom was Jawahar Singh, now conceived the idea of ousting Hira Singh, and, with

40. Smyth, G.C. op. cit., p. 98 ; also Richmond to Currie, 12 Nov. 1843, For. Sec. 23 March 1844, No. 530.

The fact is that there was much speculation in the British quarters over the question whether Gulab Singh would at all respond to the call of Hira Singh, and if so, when would he come, and what would he attempt to do at Lahore. On September 26, Richmond wrote to his Secretary that if Gulab Singh felt that his position was secure in the hills, he might come to Lahore with a view to taking possession of Kashmir and Peshawar, and the Panjab also, if possible (For. Sec. 23 March 1844, No. 487 ; see also Richmond to Thompson, 18 Sept. 1843, For. Sec 23 March 1844, No. 463). But a fortnight later, the Political Agent opined that Gulab Singh would not venture to come in clash with the Sikhs ; that the object of his visit would be simply to ascertain the views of their chiefs, and to attempt reconciliation beetween Suchet Singh and Hira Singh or widen the gulf between them (Richmond to Johnson, 16 Oct., 1843, For. Sec. 23 March 1844, No. 519). After some time, Richmond further climbed down in his views, and he said that when at Lahore, Gulab Singh would primarily try to win over the Sikhs by professing himself as a servant of the Khalsa, and to keep the Lahore Government intact. (Richmond to Currie, 12 Nov. 1843, For. Sec. 23 March 1844, No. 530). The Political Agent also felt that Gulab Singh's pressence at Lahore was essential as it was only he who could restore order there. (Richmond to Thompson, 19 Sept. 1843, For. Sec. 23 March 1844, No. 475 ; Ibid., 20 Sept. 1843, For Sec. 23 March 1844. No. 477). And if he did not come, Richmond asked his Government to be prepared for intervention in the Panjab. (Richmond to Thompson, 24 Sept. 1843, For. Sec. 23 March 1844, No. 483).

that view, tried to set against him his own younger uncle, Suchet Singh.[41] According to Richmond, though not a good administrator, yet Suchet Singh was highly ambitious. The latter also desired to be considered a better friend and a greater well-wisher of the Sikhs than were Hira Singh and Gulab Singh. Among the Sikh chiefs, at the same time, there was no capable leader. They were, therefore, prepared to support any other person of rank against Gulab Singh of whose designs they were apprehensive.[42] Jawahar Singh and his associates, accordingly, approached Suchet Singh, and told him that his nephew had "become established on the carpet of ministry" by sheer chance, otherwise he himself was "more deserving for the pillow of the glory and prosperity of the ministry." Then all of them held a conference to draw out a plan to raise Suchet Singh to power. But information about their activities leaked out, and when Gulab Singh came to know of these, he counselled his brother not only to give up all thoughts of opposing his nephew, but also to treat him as his own son and assist him in all possible ways. Suchet Singh was, however, undeterred, and went ahead with his plans to meet the instigators again on November 24. But Gulab Singh did not leave the company of his brother even for a minute on that day, and thus upset Jawhar Singh's apple cart.

The latter then took to another strategem. Seating Dalip Singh on an elephant, he carried him from his residence in the city fort to the military cantonments, where the troops had assembled on a parade. He told them that as their young Maharaja was unsafe in the hands of Hira Singh, it was up to them either to dismiss the latter or help the former in making good his escape across the Sutlej in order to seek asylum with the British. Jawahar Singh's injudicious reference to the British, however, so much offended the Khalsa troops that they took charge of him and the Maharaja, and acquainted Hira Singh with the whole matter. The Wazir immediately put Jawahar Singh under fetters, and handsomely rewarded the troops. Dalip Singh was brought back

41. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., IV, p. 264.
42. Richmond to Currie, 12 No, 1843, For. Sec. 23 March 1844, No. 530.

to the fort with due respects, and placed under the care of Missar Lal Singh who was then honoured with the title of Raja[43].

Complicity of Suchet Singh also was suspected in this affair. Hence, he too was punished. While his men were disarmed and turned out of the fort, he himself was forbidden to enter it without the Wazir's permission.

Soon after, i.e., on December 4, Gulab Singh took leave of Hira Singh to return to Jammu. The latter had amassed a huge fortune. Now he handed it over to his uncle for safe keeping in the hills.[44] Gulab Singh feared that if Hira Singh and Suchet Singh lived together, their relations might deteriorate further. He, therefore, endeavoured to separate them, and successfully induced the latter to accompany him for having a sacred bath during a forthcoming eclipse in a well near Jammu.

Some other affairs also engaged his attention before he actually quitted Lahore. He thus made a bid to introduce his retainers into the Lahore fort ; deposited into the treasury some arrears of revenue, so that other chiefs also might do likewise ; and assured the payment of arrears to the army. He also tried but failed either to send some more men for service on the western frontiers or to enforce proper discipline among the army.[45] Finally, he issued a proclamation which, after referring to the services rendered to and the honours received from the Lahore Darbar by the Jammu family, spoke of the bravery and wisdom shown by the Khalsaji in punishing the Sindhanwalias and entrusting the Wazarat to Hira Singh. The proclamation further mentioned that by way of *Ardas* or donation to Khalsaji, he had distributed rupees one thousand in every platoon, five hundred in every *Topkhana*, and seventeen thousand among the cavalrymen.[46]

On reaching Jammu, Gulab Singh's first care was to attend to all the wants and wishes of his brother. When the latter was

43. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., IV, pp. 263-67.
44. Smyth, G.C., op. cit,, pp. 101-02 ; Latif, S.M., op. cit., p. 522.
45. Richmond to Currie, 12 Dec. 1844, For. Sec. 23 March 1844, No. 537.
46. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit,, IV, pp. 267-68.

somewhat soothed, he proposed him that as he was without a child, it would do him good if he adopted one from among his own sons. To this proposal Suchet Singh heartily agreed, and publicly acknowledged Mian Ranbir Singh, nicknamed Mian Phina or Phino, Gulab Singh's youngest son, as heir to all of his lands, jagirs and property.[47]

At Lahore, Hira Singh "became firmly established on the carpet of ministry,"[48] and addressed himself to the urgent task of reconstructing the administrative machinery. It came to his notice that the British were at this time busy in making some military preparations across the Sutlej. As a precautionary measure, he also ordered the garrisoning of Kasur, facing Ferozepur, and strengthening of the defences of Phillaur. But this movement of troops on either side of the frontier led to a feeling of uneasiness among the people. The rich among them began to cart their wealth to the British India, and many families also of the nobles moved out of the Panjab on the pretext of making pilgrimages. Faqir Aziz-ud-Din lamented that he was not a Hindu, otherwise he too would have gone to the Ganges.[49]

At this time of excitement occurred the revolt of Kashmira Singh and Peshora Singh. They were two reputed sons of Ranjit Singh. While the former held Sialkot as his patrimony from the late Maharaja, the latter occupied Gujranwala. On the basis of an evidence furnished by one of the managers of Kashmira Singh's estates, named Kapur Singh, Hira Singh charged the two Princes of having conspired with the Sindhawalias to murder Dhian Singh. There was also a letter written by Kashmira Singh and Peshora

47. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 246 ; Smyth, G.C, op. cit., p. 102 ; Latif, S.M., op. cit., p. 522.

An intelligence report of December 31, 1843, however, wrongly states that it was Sohan Singh who was adopted by Suchet Singh (Gupta, H.R., *Panjab on the eve of First Sikh War*, 1956, p. 12).

48. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., IV, p. 267

49. Abstract of Intelligence, 3-4 Apl., 18 March, 18 Apl., 1844—Gupta, H.R., op. cit., pp. 141, 120, 158.

Singh which strengthened the case against them[50]. An order was, therefore, issued to Gulab Singh to march on Sialkot and seize their persons as well as property.

The Princes protested their innocence, but submitted, and were brought to Jammu where a fine of rupees fifty lakhs was imposed upon them.

The Khalsa troops were, however, not prepared to allow the reputed sons of Ranjit Singh to be treated in this manner[51]. They openly expressed their resentment over Gulab Singh's proceedings[52]. "How had he dared to do that, they asked, "without consulting the Khalsa ?"[53] and said that "the Dogras are bent upon the destruction of the Khalsa"[54]. In vain did Hira Singh try to pacify them by telling that Gulab Singh had reasons to believe that the Princes intended to go to the British and seek their help against the Lahore Darbar.[55] On January 22, 1844, their representatives demanded of the Wazir that not only the Princes be released forthwith and their lands restored, but also that the Jammu Rajas should pay all the arrears of revenue due from them. Hira Singh meekly submitted, and immediately wrote to his uncle to release the Princes, retaining, however, some hold over Sialkot[56]. Gulab Singh also complied with these orders, but only after having secured about rupees twenty thousand and assurances of good behaviour

50. It is said by some scholars that this letter was forged by Gulab Singh in order to get the Princes disgraced and ultimately himself occupy their territory of Sialkot.

"The Jammu Rajas," Richmond wrote to Currie on March 23, 1844, "have always been averse to these young men, as indeed they are to all who are not their own creatures, and whose birth, reputed or true, can make them the tools or the leaders of a party of the two." (For. Sec. 27 Apl. 1844, No. 170).

51. Smyth, G.C., op. cit., pp. 102-3 ; Latif, S.M., op. cit., pp. 522-23; Gupta, H.R., op. cit., p. lii.

52. Abstract of Intelligence, Jan. 11,12,16,18, 1844—Gupta H.R., op. cit., pp. 31, 34, 42, 44.

53. Ibid., 10 Jan.—p. 30

54. Ibid., 15 Jan.—p. 40

55. Ibid., Jan , 17, 19—p. 46

56. Ibid., 22 Jan.—pp. 55-52.

from them.[57]

Not long after, Kashmira Singh and Peshora Singh again adopted a defiant attitude, and were joined by two regiments of the irregular infantry (Ramgols) and some other mutinous troops of the Lahore Darbar also. In order to fortify their position further, they sought help from the British. But the latter rejected their overtures. It does not, however, mean that the British were kindly disposed towards Hira Singh. Far from it. The government of Hira Singh, wrote Richmond on March 23 to Frederick Currie, Secretary to the Government of India,

> is built solely upon the favor of the army, and chiefs upon the favor of the officers of that army. Their favor can, however, be procured only so long as there is money where with to purchase it and as scarcely any revenue has come in or can be collected, the Raja is reduced to draw upon the hoarded treasure (a limited fund when an army is to be gratified month after month) or he must fine and confiscate, and so render more men enemies on one side, than he can please on the other. This must I think be the case so long as the Rajas of Jammu are alive. I regard them as the great difficulty in the way of the formation of a tolerable Government in the Panjab. If they were removed, the experience and abilities of Dewan Sawan Mull, Bhai Ram Singh, Faqir Aziz-ud-Din, Lehna Singh Majithia, Sirdar Tej Singh and even Attar Singh Sindhanwalia, now at Thanesar, would well maintain the policy of Ranjit Singh, and skillfully employ the army along the Indus or the West and North, and direct the national feeling against the Afghans and others, who are even ready to enter into hostilities with the Sikhs. Until, however, the Jammu Rajas are destroyed, Dewan Sawan Mall will not venture to quit Multan and will be overawed by their superior energy, while if they are not destroyed soon, the want of means on their part to control the army, and the general animosity which is borne towards them, may cause many to resist their authority in the manner now being practised by Kanwar Kashmira Singh and his brother. The country may thus in time become so disorganised as to defy all efforts to establish a central and efficient

57. It is said that in the course of his expedition also to Sialkot, Gulab Singh was able to lay his hands on cash and property worth rupees one lakh and fifty thousand. (Abstract of Intelligence, 9 Jan. 1844—Gupta, H.R., op. cit., p. 28).

Government, until a master mind arises to give a direction to affairs.

The Political Agent nevertheless admitted that if speedy action against Kashmira Singh and Peshora Singh was not taken, there was the danger of their rising becoming so threatening as to compel the Jammu Rajas "to abandon the Government and to seek safety in the hills." Later, the rebels were likely to march upon Jammu itself[58]. Gulab Singh was, therefore, again ordered to proceed to Sialkot, and some troops from Lahore also were sent to assist him.

In view of the seriousness of the situation, this time Gulab Singh marched upon Sialkot personally. The Princes made a vigorous resistance, but were ultimately forced to lay down arms, and hand over Sialkot to Gulab Singh. But by now an astonishing sympathy had developed for them among the Lahore army. If any harm was done to the Princes, Hira Singh was warned, "the whole Khalsa would arise "[59] and they "will not leave one brick upon another in Jammu and Jasrota."[60] They further gave voice to the following feelings :

> They had put kings and chiefs to death, and had made Hira Singh master—now the Khalsa was displeased and would go and release Sialkot and then march upon Jammu. They were tired of the Dogras. If the Raja (Hira Singh) wished to remain master, he must consult the old Sirdars of the Khalsa. The Dogras had been deceiving the Khalsa by saying that the English troops were collecting but they had all the time designs of their own[61].

Hence, after their surrender, no further action against the Princes was taken, and they were let off to go towards the Manjha territory between the Ravi and the Sutlej. Almost simultaneously, Jawahar Singh also was released, under the pressure of the army[62].

58. For. Sec. 27 Apl, 1844, No. 170.
59. Abstract of Intelligence, 21 March 1844—Gupta, H.R., op. cit., p. 124
60. Ibid., 12 March 1844—p. 114 ; see also Richmond to Currie, 23 March, 1844, For. Sec. 27 Apl. 1844, No. 170.
61. Abstract of Intelligence, 22 March 1844—Gupta, H.R., op. cit., pp. 124-25.
62. Ibid., 24 March 1844—pp. 126, 128.

Hardly was Hira Singh free from the trouble with Kashmira Singh and Peshora Singh than he was called upon to deal with another serious threat posed by his own younger uncle. Suchet Singh, "a splendid swordsman and the very pink of chivalry", had, since the days of Ranjit Singh commanded the Chahar Yari troops, about 2,700 strong, which formed one of the biggest divisions of the irregular cavalry. Now he decided to take advantage of the disturbed state of affairs at Lahore to overthrow his nephew.

Some differences between Suchet Singh and Hira Singh had existed, as a matter of fact, even before the former became the Wazir. In the first instance, both had conflicting claims on the territory of Jasrota. At first, Ranjit Singh had farmed it out to Suchet Singh, but later bestowed it as a jagir on Hira Singh. Secondly, Suchet Singh had extended protection to the widow and infant children of Lehna Singh Sindhanwalia, who was one of the murderers of Dhian Singh, and thus offended Hira Singh. Thirdly, Bhai Gurmukh Singh and Missar Beli Ram, who were the other rivals of the Jammu Rajas, were secretly put to death by Sheikh Imam-ud-Din at the connivance of Hira Singh, but Suchet Singh had tried to save them[63].

These differences between the uncle and his nephew further widened owing to the conduct of Pandit Jallah. The Pandit, who belonged to Jammu, was the tutor of Hira Singh. He had three brothers also, and all of them had been the family priests of the Jammu Rajas. When Hira Singh became the Wazir, Pandit Jallah acted his *Mashir-i-Khas* or chief adviser also. Later, he was designated as the *Naib* or the Deputy Wazir. While the Wazir managed the army, his Deputy looked after the civil administration. In due course of time, the latter became so powerful that a word from his mouth was unquestionably obeyed from Lahore to Peshawar, and from Multan to Kashmir. All the chiefs sank into insignificance before him[64]. Towards Suchet Singh also he behaved

63. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 244-45; Richmond to Johnson, 16 Oct. 1843, For. Sec. 23 March 1844, No. 519.
64. Tarikh Nama, I, p. 467, quoted in Gupta, H.R., op. cit., p. xlix.

arrogantly, and not on few occasions did he give him a cause for offence[65] He used his influence further to convert Hira Singh's reverence towards his uncle into a rancorous hatred. This animosity between the two, it is said, originated from a "bed-chamber intrigue."[66]

There is, therefore, nothing surprising if Suchet Singh had allied himself with Jawahar Singh against Hira Singh in the beginning of his Wazarat. And when Kashmira Singh and Peshora Singh had risen in revolt, he extended pecuniary help to them also[67]. Hira Singh then tried to conciliate him by offering him the governorship of Rawalpindi and Peshawar[68], but he declared that "he would never rest until he had brought Raja Hira Singh and Missar Jallah to account."[69] He was, in fact, in regular touch from Jammu with some of the chiefs of the Lahore Darbar as well as the army through his agent, Dewan Jawahar Mal, and was trying to win them over.

For Gulab Singh, this was a very trying time. He saw it very clearly that the differences between Suchet Singh and Hira Singh were injuring the interests of the whole Jammu family. He, therefore, tried his level best to bridge the gap besween them. To Hira Singh he wrote in the beginning of February 1844 to recall his uncle to Lahore, and rehabilitate him to his old position. It might be even better, he suggested, if Hira Singh made room for Suchet Singh to become the Wazir and regarded himself as the Maharaja[70]. If some such arrangement was not evolved, he warned

65. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 244 ; Abstract of Intelligence, 19 Jan. 1844—Gupta, H.R., op. cit., p. 47.
66. Gupta, H.R., op. cit., pp. lvi-lvii.
67. Abstract of Intelligence, 15 March 1844—Gupta, H.R., op. cit., p. 117. Suchet Singh also expressed his displeasure to Gulab Singh over the latter's proceedings against the Princes. (Ibid., Jan. 11, 13—pp. 31, 36).
68. Abstract of Intelligence, 31 Dec. 1843—Gupta, H. R., op. cit., pp. 12-13.
69. Ibid., 13 Feb 1844—p. 87.
70. Some writers have interpretted this to mean that Gulab Singh advised Hira Singh to actually assume the insignia of royalty. This interpretation is, however, totally wrong. The latter was only to *regard* himself as the Maharaja, and not *actually* become so. Keeping in view the context in which this suggestion was made, it can only mean that Gulab Singh wanted Hira Singh to assume the role of a superior guide or adviser and nothing more.

his nephew, Suchet Singh was sure to join hands with their enemies, and thus make things hot for both of them[71]. Truly realising that Pandit Jallah was the real mischief maker and, therefore, the main stumbling block, Gulab Singh further suggested his nephew to remove him from his present position and make him the manager of his own estates as well as of the town duties of Lahore and Amritsar[72].

Gulab Singh tried to reason out with Suchet Singh also, but found that he was not amenable[73]. The latter had, in fact, now come to treat his dealings with his younger uncle as an affair of honour,[74] and was, therefore, prepared even to go over to the British. But Hira Singh assured Gulab Singh that he regarded him as his father, and would attend to his advice. He, however, urged his uncle, to hold Suchet Singh back for some time.[75]

Hira Singh's difficulties at Lahore were, in the mean time, increasing. While on the one hand, the unsettled conditions in the country had made it impossible to realise the revenue, the extraordinary expenditure on the army and other miscellaneous charges had the effect of exhausting the government treasury. Economy in expenditure was, therefore, the prime need of the hour, and to effect it, the Wazir, on the advice of his Deputy, disbanded several regiments, and dismissed many European officers. Efforts were made to realise the arrears of revenue also from the chiefs. But these measures turned both the chiefs and the army against the administration so much that "a general conspiracy" is said to have been hatched out to put both Hira Singh and Pandit Jallah to death;[76] and on January 19 a cavalryman with a carbine was actually found in one of the apartments of the former's house.[77] An open call also was given to the Khalsa to rise against the Dogras who, it was

71. Abstract of Intelligence, 12 Feb. 1844—Gupta, H.R., op. cit., p, 86.
72. Ibid., 12 Feb, 17 Mar 1844—pp. 86, 119.
73. Ibid., 21, 26 Feb. 1844—pp. 95, 100.
74. Ibid., 1 March 1844—p. 104.
75. Ibid., 12 Feb. 1844—p. 86.
76. Ibid., 5 Jan. 1844—p. 21.

said, "wanted to become masters of the Panjab." In view of these developments, Hira Singh was advised to give up his practice of inspecting the troops. The Pandit further suggested him to come to an understanding with the British "for himself and let them have the country."

The Pandit was, in fact, at the bottom of all the troubles. Several people, including Gulab Singh, had, therefore, been suggesting Hira Singh to dismiss him, but to no effect.[78] Gradually, however, the Wazir came round to this view point, and, on January 23, he politely asked his Deputy to go to Jasrota.[79] But the latter did not oblige him. When the conditions further deteriorated, Hira Singh repeated his suggestion. This time the Pandit replied that the "life was short and that man should enjoy it while he could."[80]

The matters, therefore, drifted and came to such a pass that on March 24, when Hira Singh was holding a Darbar in his house, four men of the Panchayats of Col. Holme's regiments came and said :

> They had come on the part of the whole of the Khalsa to him —Raja Hira Singh, who regarded himself as a very emperor. The order of the Khalsa was as follows. When his father was slain, the Khalsa had avenged his death. He had petitioned and the Khalsa had listened favourably to him. Now he had made Misser Jallah his Wazir—a man who had done things the most atrocious and debased. The Khalsa had represented these things, but he had shut his ears to the Khalsa. The Khalsa had thus become displeased.

Hearing these words, Hira Singh was unnerved. He asked the visitors to petition what their concrete demand was. But the latter said :

> They were no petitioners. They were the bearers of the message of the Khalsa—they petitioned the throne only. What the message of the Khalsa was he should hear.

77. Ibid., 19 Jan. 1844—p. 47.
78. Ibid., 21 Jan. 1844—p. 61.
79. Ibid., 23 Jan. 1844—p. 54.
80. Ibid., 18 Mar. 1844—p. 120.

The Panches then enumerated a number of lapses on the part of Hira Singh. The latter, in order to pacify them, owned these, and assured them that in future he would always consult the Khalsa. Finally, the Panchas demanded the surrender of Pandit Jallah and a few other chiefs, and if this demand was not complied with, Hira Singh himself was threatened to be seized. The Wazir, however, promised to obey the wishes of the Khalsa, whereafter the visitors departed.[81]

But later on the same day, Hira Singh convened a meeting of all the Panchas and officers of the army at his residence. Addressing this huge gathering of about 10,000 men, he said that he was the servant of the Khalsa, and had paid the army regularly during the past six months. Now he wanted leave to go to Jasrota. If the Khalsa wished, he was willing to proceed to Multan or Peshawar also, but was eager to quit the Wazarat. The assembled, however, turned his proposal down, and, instead, asked him to dismiss Pandit Jallah to Jasrota and hand Sheikh Imam-ud-Din over to them. Hira Singh then bowed before them, and promised to gratify their wishes.

In reality, however, the Wazir had neither the will nor a strong desire to comply with the demands of the Khalsa. Hence, to be able to meet any contingency, he began to strengthen his position in Lahore by surrounding himself with more hill troops[82], and keeping in good humour the cavalry which was inclined towards him.

The uncertainty, therefore, continued and thousands of men flocked to the capital in the hope that soon there might be an occasion to plunder its people.[83] Suchet Singh also was expected to reach Lahore soon in response to the urgent message which had gone to a few days before from some of the battalions. He had been asked to make for Lahore immediately even if he had to "borrow feathers and wings from the birds for the purpose,

81. Ibid., 24 Mar. 1844—pp. 126-27.
82. Ibid., also 26 Mar. 1844—p. 131.
83. Ibid., 25 Mar. 1844—p. 129.

because at that time all the people would at once accept the rope of obedience to him about the necks of their lives."[84]

Suchet Singh was already on the look out for a pretence to strike against his nephew[85], and itching particularly "to seize Jallah, and to put a string through his nostrils, and in that condition to make him dance through all the streets of Lahore."[86] Even to Gulab Singh he had plainly told that he had lost all confidence in him,[87] and was, therefore, no more willing to discuss his affairs with him.[88] A *Khillat* or robe of honour sent by Hira Singh also was scornfully returned.[89] The invitation from Lahore, under these circumstances, was most welcome, and he immediately left for Samba, his jagir, ostensibly on a hunting expedition but actually to prepare for his onward journey.

As soon as the news of Suchet Singh's intentions reached Hira Singh and Pandit Jallah, the latter wrote to Gulab Singh, urging him to detain his brother in the hills.[90] Gulab Singh lost no time, went to Samba, and, placing his turban at his brother's feet,[91] beseeched him to give up his hostile designs. "Why should he now go and bring destruction upon them all," he asked Suchet Singh. Still, if he was adament, let him go; but before leaving, Gulab Singh asked his brother to cut his throat.[92] Suchet Singh then relented.[93] But there was no sign of a real change of heart. Hence, Gulab Singh thought it fit to write once again to Hira Singh to recall his younger uncle to the capital at his earliest and send Pandit Jallah to Jasrota.[94] He further advised his nephew,

84. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., IV, p. 278.
85. Abstract of Intelligence, 18-20 Feb. 1848—Gupta, H.R., op. cit., p. 93.
86. Gupta, H.R., op. cit., p. lviii.
87. Abstract of Intelligence, 21 Feb. 1844—Gupta, H.R., op. cit., p. 95.
88. Ibid., 26 Feb. 1844—p. 100.
89. Ibid., 23 Feb. 1844—pp. 97-98.
90. Ibid., 3 Mar. 1844—p. 108.
91. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 247.
92. Abstract of Intelligence, 12-15 Mar. 1844, Gupta, H.R., op. cit., pp. 116-17.
93. Ibid., 13 Mar. 1844—p. 116.
94. Ibid., 17 Mar. 1844—p. 119.

and very timely, to run the adminstration of the country in consultation with the old chiefs, and desist from resuming lands and discharging men.

No sooner, however, had Gulab Singh turned his back than Suchet Singh left on his fateful journey to Lahore. The former then sent an S.O.S. to Hira Singh to go all out to appease the latter when he arrived at the capital, and assured him that after a couple of days he himself also would come and bring Suchet Singh back to Jammu. To Pandit Jallah also he appealed to endeavour to keep the nephew and his uncle on cordial terms with each other.[95]

It was 26th of March when Suchet Singh reached Shahdara. Accompanied by forty or forty-five trusted men, including Rai Kesri Singh, he then crossed the Ravi, and made a dash for the encampment of the soldiers who had invited him. By this time, however, Hira Singh had won over the army through lavish promises, which, therefore, advised Suchet Singh to go home. But the die was cast, and the latter Raja took up his position in a ruined mosque of Mian Wadda.

Hira Singh then consulted Pandit Jallah. The latter, "who was intent upon destroying the foundation of the dynasty of Jamwals (the people of Jammu), said that the game had come within the trap from the veils of the unknown and at that time it was very easy for him to destroy the foundation of his existence. He further remarked that so long as the foundation of his (Raja Suchet Singh's) existence and life would not be destroyed, it was impossible for the ministry to be strong and for the chiefship to be stable..." To reinforce his arguments, he further told Hira Singh that he would be done to death if he now failed to strike, and produced a *Pothi* or horoscope in which it was written that either Hira Singh or Suchet Singh would fall the next day[96]. The young Raja was easily taken in, and ordered a large force, consisting of about 20,000 men, to attack his uncle.

95. Ibid., 28 Mar. 1844—p. 133.
96. Pearse, Hugh, op. cit., p. 255.

The officers of the *Topkhana* or artillery, however, hesitated to obey Hira Singh's orders. They pointed out that for them all the Jammu Rajas were worthy of respect, and their intention was not to pick a quarrel with any one of them; that if Suchet Singh was killed in the action, Gulab Singh would curse them. Still if the Wazir was bent upon the extermination of his uncle, he should give them in writing that the whole responsibility would rest on his shoulders. Hira Singh at once vested them with the undertaking.

At this stage, some chiefs tried to make last minute efforts at reconciliation between the warring sides, but these elicited only rebukes from the Wazir and his Deputy. Even an offer of peace from Suchet Singh was turned down by them. A suggestion was then made to the former either to move to a safer place or join the main body of his troops stationed at Shahdara, but this the Raja spurned. Nevertheless, he told his followers that if any one of them wanted to go, he was at liberty to do so; but none showed inclination to desert.[97]

Thus prepared to die, Suchet Singh and his band of few supporters spent the night of March 26 with perfect ease in listening to the recital of the holy *Granth*. As soon as the day broke, they were surrounded by the Lahore army. With an unparalleled courage, Suchet Singh then came forward and said to the advancing troops :

> Relying on your good faith, I came to Lahore at your special invitation. You have forsaken me and have now come to kill me in such large numbers. I beseech you, at this moment, to behave like true soldiers. Come on, one by one, and let the world see the worth of a Rajput soldier.

The challenge struck the front rank soldiers with such an awe and terror that, for a time, they remained as motionless as statues. The handful of brave Rajputs then rushed sword in hand upon their assailants, and so furious was their charge that four battalions of their opponents were soon driven back. The gunners fled simply

97. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., IV, pp. 283-86.

out of fright, without firing a single shot, although Hira Singh was close upon their heels, with a lighted torch in his hand, urging upon them to push forward and fire. Ultimately, however, thousands of cannon balls were discharged,[98] and the besieged, numbering less than fifty, were overcome more by the weight of numbers than valour, and killed to a man. But before they fell, each one of them cut down with his sword a number of assailants—Suchet Singh despatched three, Kesri Singh five and Basant Singh as many as seventeen;[99] and 150 in all. About 200 of the latter were wounded also.[100]

When all was over, Hira Singh visited the field of action, and cried his heart out when his eyes met the dead body of his uncle. There also lay Rai Kesri Singh, not yet dead, but in a critical condition. When the Wazir passed by his side, the dying Rajput greeted him with *Jai Dev*, and made signs for water. The reply he got was—"the best place for quenching his thirst was the hills where there was plenty of clear, cold water."[101]

When Gulab Singh was informed of his brother's rash journey to Lahore, he had written, as already noted, to both Hira Singh and Pandit Jallah to treat the Raja kindly. Not satisfied with this, he had also sent Sohan Singh, his son, and Dewan Jawala Sahi after his brother to induce him to retrace his steps. But alas ! they were too late.[102]

If Alexander Gardiner, an American in the service of Gulab Singh, is to be believed, the latter burst into tears when he came to know of Suchet Singh's departure, and told the servant : "He will be killed to a certainty......Take your force...hasten to Lahore,

98. Latif, S.M., op. cit., pp. 525-26 ; M. Gregor, W.L. op. cit. pp. 28-29.
99. Abstract of Intelligence, 8 Apl. 1844—Gupta, H.R., op. cit , p. 146.
100. *Ibid* , 28 Mar. 1844—p. 133.
According to S.M. Latif (p. 527), Kesri Singh killed about twenty soldiers of the Lahore army.
101. Latif, S.M., op. cit., p. 527; Smyth, G.C., op. cit., p. 112.
102. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 247.
According to an intelligence report of March 28 from Lahore, however, both the men sent after Suchet Singh were the sons of Gulab Singh (Gupta, H.R., op. cit., p.133).

and defend him." Gulab Singh would not lose even a minute in committing his orders to paper, and gave him a gold ring which he was to show as a proof of representing the Raja. Alexander devoured the way, and reached Lahore, but a day late ![103]

Thus disappeared from the Lahore Darbar the second Dogra chief along with a number of his valiant followers also. Although primarily brought about by a schism in the Dogra family itself, this event dealt the second severest blow, after the death of Dhian Singh, to the Dogra influence over the Lahore Darbar, and, therefore, over the Panjab politics. As we shall subsequently see, it introduced an element of discord in the relations between Hira Singh and Gulab Singh also.

103. Pearse, Hugh, op. cit., pp. 255-56.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Panjab Politics and Schism in the Jammu Family (Continued)

After Suchet Singh, it was the turn of Attar Singh Sindhanwalia to challenge the authority of Hira Singh.

The Sindhanwalia's cause was espoused by Bawa Bir Singh. Though a religious man of great repute in the Manjha country, the latter had taken under his care many disaffected Sikh chiefs of the Lahore Darbar and also collected a strong force of 5,000 men. After Suchet Singh's death, he launched a malicious propaganda against Hira Singh and Gulab Singh. Declaring that both the former and Kesri Singh were his disciples, he called upon his followers to punish the Jammu Rajas for their murder. Until that was done, he said, neither would he regard himself as the apostle

of the Sikhs nor the Sikhs as his disciples.[1] He further announced that during the minority of Dalip Singh, only a Sikh should hold the office of the Wazir, and that no one was better qualified for it than Attar Singh.

It was under such provocations and on the advice of the British that Attar Singh left Thanesar, where he had taken up his quarters since his escape from Lahore, and joined Bawa Bir Singh on May 2, 1844. He was followed by Kashmira Singh and Peshora Singh also. Even Rani Jindan and her brother, Jawahar Singh, along with the Maharaja, intended to go to Bir Singh's camp[2], if possible, otherwise they wanted the Bawa to come to Lahore and secure their release from "imprisonment."[3].

The end of his power thus stared Hira Singh in the face. When he urged the Lahore troops to march upon Bawa Bir Singh's camp, they hung back, for although Attar Singh might be a traitor and plotting to deliver his countrymen into the hands of the British, they were much averse from taking up arms against the descendants of Ranjit Singh and the holy Baba. It was, therefore, only after Hira Singh had assured them that no harm would befall Bir Singh that the troops moved out of Lahore under Mian Labh Singh and Gulab Singh Calcuttia.[4] When, however, the two sides clashed, not only Attar Singh and Kashmira Singh but the Baba also was killed. Strangely, the greedy soldiers then became quite oblivious of the sanctity of the holy man's camp, and plundered it to their hearts' content. Peshora Singh, who escaped annihilation, submitted, was forgiven, and allowed to lead a quiet life at Gujranwala.

Thus did Hira Singh get rid of his second powerful rival also. But the fate of Prince Kashmira Singh, and still more of the revered Baba, told heavily on him. For a long time the Khalsa talked of avenging their Guru on him; and even extra-ordinarily large

1. Abstract of Intelligence, 5 April 1844—Gupta, H.R., op. cit., p. 143; also Richmond to Currie, 14 June 1844, For. Sec. 13 July 1844, No. 128.
2. Abstract of Intelligence, 10 Apl. 1844—Gupta, H.R., op. cit., p. 148.
3. Ibid., 29 Apl. 1844—p. 170.
4. Ibid., 5 May 1844—p. 177.

donations[5] and Hira Singh's declaration that he was a Sikh did not assuage their anger.[6] "They will root out the family of the Dogras," said the Sikhs.[7] Hira Singh had, therefore, to tighten his security by posting in his house more hillmen who arrived from Jammu.[8] For some days, he also abstained from inspecting the army.[9]

Unfortunately, about this time Hira Singh's relations with Gulab Singh also became strained. Earlier, both were on very cordial terms with each other. The nephew sought his uncle's advice in the state matters,[10] and the uncle lent him a helpin hand in every time of need. We have already noted about Gulab Singh's visit to Lahore after Dhian Singh's death and his efforts to bind the chiefs of the Darbar as well as the army to the cause of Hira Singh. When he learnt that his nephew, urged by Pandit Jallah, was ill-treating some old chiefs, he advised him to beware of the Pandit and direct the administration himself.[11] So great was, however, the spell of the Pandit over the young Wazir that the latter dared not defy him. But Hira Singh's regard for Gulab Singh also was no less, and, in the beginning of January 1844, he transferred to his control the management of the territories of Hazara and Khatur as well as the affairs of Dewan Mulraj of Multan.[12] In the case of Kashmir, Gulab Singh was given carte

5. So large were these donations that people began to say, "gold is gathered in Lahore," and many regiments from outstations came to receive it. (Abstract of Intelligence, 20 May, 1844—Gupta, H.R., op. cit., p. 193). On one single day (May 22) as many as ten lakhs of rupees were taken out of the treasury for distribution among the army (Ibid , 22 May—p. 195).
6. Ibid., 13 May 1844—p. 187.
7. Ibid., 16 May 1844—p. 189.
8. Ibid., 18 May, 21 May 1844—pp. 191, 194.
9. Ibid., 22 May 1844—p. 195.
10. Ibid., 13 Jan., 7 Feb., 2 May 1844—pp. 38, 79, 106.
11. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., IV, pp. 271-72.
12. Abstract of Intelligence, 7 Jan., 30 March 1844 Gupta, H.R. op. cit.. pp. 24-25, 136.

blanche,[13] and it was openly recognised that its affairs could not be settled without consulting him.[14]

With the death of Suchet Singh were, however, sown the first seeds of discord between the nephew and his uncle. Stunned with the shock,[15] Gulab Singh said that if the death of Dhian Singh had split him into two parts, that of Suchet Singh had deprived him of an arm.[16]

When the garments of the late Raja arrived at Samba, the ladies of his house prepared to commit Sati with them. Gulab Singh went there, and tried to dissuade them from their intentions, but in vain.[17] Forty-seven of them—five wives and thirty-five concubines and slaves of Suchet Singh, and seven ladies of the house of Kesri Singh and his brothers,[18] therefore, burnt themselves.[19] Such was the grief that several men followers also of the Raja tore off their garments, and threw themselves upon the funeral pyre.

One of Suchet Singh's widows, who was the sister of Raja Jagat Chand of Belaspur, however, said that not till she had avenged her husband's death would she burn herself. She owned about a crore of rupees and also a considerable body of troops.[20]

13. For. Sec. 23 March 1844, No. 481.
14. Abstract of Intelligence, 10 Jan. 1844—Gupta, H.R., op. cit., p. 30.
It was under this authority that Gulab Singh often settled the affairs of Kashmir independently. In January 1844, for instance, when its governor, Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din, fell ill, Gulab Singh sent there his own officer, Dulel Singh, and directed the governor to act in concert with him. The Sheikh was further ordered to send to Jammu the sons of the chief of Kaghan in the Hazara District, who were then detained by him (Ibid., 26 Jan. 1844—pp. 58-59). In the middle of 1844, Gulab Singh asked the governor to send half of the revenue to him and half to Lahore (Ibid. 14 May 1844—p. 188).
15. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., IV, p. 288.
16. Abstract of Intelligence, 2 May 1844—Gupta, H.R., op. cit., p. 172.
17. Ibid., 29 March 1844—p. 135.
18. Ibid., 11 Apl. 1844—p. 150.
According to W.L. M' Gregor, however, forty-five ladies of the house of Suchet Singh, eleven of Kesri Singh, the same number of Nihal Singh and five of Basant Singh committed Sati (M' Gregor, op. cit II, p. 29).
19. Abstract of Intelligence, 31 March 1844—Gupta, H.R., op. cit., p. 137.
20. Ibid., 2 April—pp. 139-40.

Gulab Singh wished her to adopt one of his sons, and place him in possession of her property.[21] The widow was, no doubt, prepared to do so with a will, and adopt Gulab Singh's eldest son, Mian Sohan Singh, but only after he had avenged her on Hira Singh, and if he did not, she intended either to distribute all her belongings in charity and then end her life,[22] or proceed herself to Lahore and seek the assistance of the Khalsa.[23]

In his agony, Gulab Singh wrote to Hira Singh that he had not done well in killing his uncle. But it was Pandit Jallah whom he held chiefly responsible for the tragedy, and said that he should suffer for it. All the hill-chiefs, he further wrote, would now see that in the Jammu family there was no unity. They would, therefore, be encouraged to rise on all sides.[24]

To aggravate the matters further, it came to light at this time that during the recent Anglo-Afghan War Suchet Singh had secretly conveyed to Ferozepur a large quantity of coin and bullion worth about fiften lakhs of rupees.[25] Buried in a house owned by the Jammu family, it was attempted to be removed after the Raja's death by Nihal Singh, one of his confidential agents. Nihal Singh was, however, caught red handed by the British authorities who then took possession of the treasure. Instigated by Pandit Jallah, Hira Singh now claimed a share in it as well as the other property of his late uncle. The Pandit's intention in fostering a quarrel in the Jammu family, it is said, was to divert their attention from the

21. Ibid., 13 April, 27 April. 1844—pp. 152, 167.
22. Ibid., 17 April 1844—p. 157.
23. Ibid., 3 Apl. 1844—p. 141.
24. Ibid., 31 March, 22 Apl. 1844—pp. 137, 161.
25. There are various opinions about Suchet Singh's aim of removing this treasure to the British territory. According to one, after the death of Nau Nihal Singh, Suchet Singh had intended to leave the Panjab with all his wealth, estimated at two crores of rupees, and pass the rest of his life in performing pilgrimages and building temples etc. (Idid., 11 Apl. 1844, pp. 149-50, See also Broadfoot to Currie, 25 Apl. 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845, No. 66). Another opinion is that Suchet Singh intended the money to be offered as a part of an ingratiatory loan to the British Government which was then borrowing from the protected Sikh chiefs (Cunningham, J.D., op. cit., p. 237.)

affairs of the Panjab which he himself wished to rule in the name of his young master. As the Lahore army had by now come to disbelieve the threat of the British intervention, and as it was likely to relish the idea of avenging itself on the "harsh and oppressive" nature of Gulab Singh, Jallah's policy was further expected to impart "a new direction to the attention of the soldiery."[26]

In pursuance of this policy, Hira Singh sent an agent to Suchet Singh's widow to induce her to adopt one of his younger brothers, Mian Moti Singh, in place of Gulab Singh's son;[27] and almost simultaneously asked his brother, who was staying at Jammu with Gulab Singh, to put himself in possession of the late uncle's estates without any delay.[28] But Gulab Singh outwitted Hira Singh, and occupied all the forts of Suchet Singh before the Mian's men arrived anywhere near them. Ranbir Singh was then put incharge of these, with the son of late Kesri Singh as his deputy.[39] A little later, Gulab Singh also took possession of all the places which belonged to late Dhian Singh and Hira Singh himself.[30] So that none could either go to or come from Kashmir without his knowledge, guards were posted at some places on the route leading to it.[31] Military preparations also began to be made simultaneously.[32]

The widow of Suchet Singh also tried to harass Hira Singh. She sent an agent to the Governor-General of India,[33] and also helped Bawa Bir Singh with twenty thousand rupees.[34] It may be

26. Richmond to Currie, 14 June 1844, For. Sec. 13 July 1844, No. 128; Ibid., 13 Aug. 1844, For. Sec. 21 Sept. 184, No. 118.
27. Abstract of Intelligence, 6 April, 9 Apl. 1844—Gupta, H.R., op. cit., pp. 144, 147.
28. Ibid., 1 Apl. 1844—p. 139.
29. Ibid., 3 Apl., 9 Apl. 1844—pp. 141, 147.
There were rumours that Gulab Singh also intended to arrest Hira Singh's brothers, Jawahar Singh and Moti Singh, who had since long been staying with Gulab Singh at Jammu, but were presently engaged in some military operations in the neighbourhood of Kashmir. (Ibid, 2 Apl. 1844—p. 140).
30. Ibid, 22 Apl. 1844—p. 161.
31. Ibid., 23 Apl. 1844—p. 162.
32. Ibid., 14 Apl., 17 Apl., 21 Apl., 27 May, 3 June, 9 June, 1844—pp. 153, 157, 161, 200, 207, 211.
33. Ibid., 2 May. 14 June 1844—pp. 172-173, 215.
34. Ibid., 4 May 1844—p. 176.

recalled here that the Bawa was at this time openly giving shelter to the enemies of the Lahore Wazir. She also induced the Brahmans of Jammu, Ramnagar and some other places to socially boycott the family of Pandit Jallah, and not even to smoke in their company.[35]

Hira Singh also retaliated. He vetoed his uncle's attempt to invest Mian Ranbir Singh with the title of Raja.[36] The District of Hazara was ordered to be taken away from Gulab Singh, and granted in farm to Jallah.[37] Further, while the troops of late Suchet Singh were direclty lured by liberal promises to join Hira Singh's ranks,[38] disaffection was sought to be created among those of Gulab Singh by inciting them to demand higher pay.[39] Hira Singh's attitude towards his uncle's control over Kashmir also underwent a change. Whatever the position of the latter with regard to it, the Governor of Kashmir was told to remember that it was a dependency of Lahore.[40] It is said that Pandit Jallah even tried to take the life of Gulab Singh by secretly administering poison to him.[41]

Despite these retaliatory measures, Hira Singh was inwardly afraid that "the affairs of Raja Suchet Singh would bring evil upon him."[42] Hence, at the close of April he sent Bhai Ram Singh to Jammu to intercede for him as well as his Deputy with Gulab Singh and seek pardon for both of them.[43]

Gulab Singh also showed his willingness to meet his nephew half way because the latter was at this time faced with a serious threat from a combination of their common enemies, namely, Kashmira Singh, Peshora Singh and Attar Singh Sindhanwalia. He, therefore, deputed Dewan Jawala Sahai and Pandit Charan Dass,

35. Ibid., 17 Apl. 1844—pp. 156-57.
36. Ibid., 27 Apl. 1844—p. 167.
37. Ibid., 14 Apl. 3 June 1844—pp. 153, 206.
38. Ibid., 2 May 1844, p. 172, Some of these men did join Hira Singh's service (Ibid, 3 May, 22 June 1844—pp. 173, 223).
39 Ibid., 7 May, 11 May 1844—pp. 179, 184.
40. Ibid., 2 June, 1844—p. 205.
41. Ibid., 6 June, 1844—p. 209.
42. Ibid., 22 Apl. 1844—p. 161.
43. Ibid., 23 Apl. 1844—p. 162.

brother of Pandit Jallah, for nogotiations. These emissaries appeared in the Lahore Darbar on May 18, 1844.

As a result of their talks,[44] Hira Singh ultimately agreed to place Suchet Singh's territorial possessions under Mian Ranbir Singh, and Gulab Singh assured him of his full support against the Sikhs if they raised any dust over the death of Bawa Bir Singh.[45] But under the evil influence of Pandit Jallah, Hira Singh soon backed out, demanded division of the territories,[46] and pressed Jawala Sahai and Charan Dass to bring his uncle round to it.[47] Bhai Ram Singh also was asked to arbitrate in the matter, but he begged to be excused. Nor did Faqirs Aziz-ud-Din[48] and Nur-ud-Din, and Dewans Ralla Ram and Jawahar Mall show their willingness to go to the Governor General of India in order to plead for the transfer of the treasure of Suchet Singh to Hira Singh.[49] The Lahore Wazir then himself tried to pressurise Gulab Singh, and soon was the latter asked to render accounts[50] and pay up his revenue.[51]

Gulab Singh immediately complied. He sent three lakhs of rupees to Lahore,[52] and also showed his readiness to arrive at a negotiated settlement of the disputes.[53] Dewan Jawala Sahai and Pandit Charan Dass, accordingly, again arrived at the capital on June 28, and agreed to a division of the property in question, according to which the district of Samba was to go to Hira Singh and the rest was to be shared equally by him and Gulab Singh. This agreement was then committed to paper, and sent to Jammu for the signatures of the latter.[54]

44. Ibid., 18 May 1844—pp. 190-91.
45. Ibid., 20 May, 1844—p. 193.
46. Ibid., 25 May, 4 June 1844—pp. 199, 207.
47. Ibid., 29 May 1844—p. 202.
48. Ibid., 7 June 1844—pp. 210-11.
49. Ibid., 9 June 1844—p. 211.
50. Ibid., 2 June 1844—p. 205.
51. Ibid., 24 May 1844—p. 198.
52. Ibid., 14 June 1844—p. 215.
53. Ibid., 19 June 1844—pp. 219-20.
54. Ibid., 28-29 June 1844—pp. 232-33.

Opposed to the division though he was so long as his brother's widow was alive,[55] yet Gulab Singh now yielded to the repeated representations of his nephew. But before signing the agreement, he submitted that as the administration in Kashmir was suffering owing to the illness and infirmity of its governor, Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din, this territory, being bounded by many districts already under him, may be farmed out to him. It would enable him to manage better the affairs of Ladakh, and maintain order in Hazara, Gilgit, Kaghan and Muzaffarabad. He further applied that Dera Din Panah, a small village on the way to Dera Ismail Khan from Muzaffarabad, and formerly held as jagir by Suchet Singh, may be conferred upon him, and the farm of the jagirs of late Jamadar Khushal Singh,[56] bordering on the Jammu territory, granted to Ranbir Singh.[57]

In reply to Gulab Singh's submission, Hira Singh and Pandit Jallah drew up a document, on July 23, containing ten articles, the more important of which said that the treasure deposited in the forts of Jammu and Riasi should be divided equally between Hira Singh and Gulab Singh, the property of Suchet Singh should be divided between Hira Singh and Gulab Singh as previously settled; the produce of the districts and the salt mines held by Gulab Singh in farm should be sent in regular instalments to Lahore; the farms of the Hazara District for which he had lately applied would be assigned to him on a contract of four lakhs of rupees per year; and he should entertain no apprehensions of the Sikhs, and come to Lahore so that mutual differences which now existed were removed.[58]

Dewan Jawala Shai and Pandit Charan Dass also approved of this division of the property,[59] and sent the document to Jammu for ratification. With this, the differences between Hira Singh and Gulab Singh appeared to be ending. But it is the unexpected that

55. Ibid., 19 July 1844—pp. 252-53.
56. He died on June 17, 1844.
57. Ibid., 4 July 1844—p. 239.
58. Ibid., 23 July 1844—p. 256.
59. D-49, Patiala Archives.

always happens. The former took two hasty steps, and again occurred the rupture.

The first was Hira Singh's bid to occupy the fort of Riasi. Some time before, he had sent two men to take its charge from those of Gulab Singh on the ground that he was the master of the Panjab, while the latter was merely a dependent. The garrison of the fort, however, not only refused to surrender it, but also cast the Lahore agents into prison.[60] Unfortunately, the news of this incident reached Lahore on the very day the above agreement was drafted, and embittered the feelings of both Hira Singh and Gulab Singh.[61]

Almost simultaneously, the impatient Wazir sent Bachana, the manager of his jagir of Jasrota, to take from Suchet Singh's widow the possession of Samba which, according to the agreement, was to fall to his share. But the widow was not a party to this agreement. Nor had she given up her resolve to avenge her husband's death. Given time, Gulab Singh might have brought her also round. But as the matters stood, she resisted Bachana when he arrived, forced him to retreat,[62] and announced her determination to frustrate any future attempt also at the occupation of Samba.[63]

When informed of these happenings, Hira Singh bade Jawala Sahi and Charan Dass to go to Jammu, and tell Gulab Singh that he should persuade the widow for the peaceful transfer of the place, as agreed upon.[64] An effort to brow beat the widow directly also was at the same time made. Jawahar Mal and Nihal Singh, two former confidential servants of Suchet Singh, were asked to go to Samba[65] and try to secure her submission under the threat of an invasion by the Sikh troops.[66] This threat was indeed ordered to be executed on July 29 when Hira Singh learnt that in the defence of

60. Abstract of Intelligence, 23 July 1844, Gupta, H.R., op. cit., p. 256.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid., 20 July 1844—p. 253.
63. Ibid., 22 July 1844—p. 255-56.
64. Ibid., 20 July 1844—p. 253.
65. Ibid., 22 July 1844—p. 256.
66. Ibid.

Samba, Main Ranbir Singh also had taken part. But Jawala Sahi advised Hira Singh to have patience and act with caution as his master too commanded an army ![67]

Gulab Singh was greatly upset at the turn of events. Dhian Singh, he said, had always deferred to him, but Hira Singh's conduct towards him was the reverse. So great was, in fact, his disillusionment over his nephew's behaviour that he wished to renounce his position and take up his abode at Benaras; but, in his absence, he feared that Pandit Jallah would exterminate his family.[68] Hence, he prepared himself for the military clash with Hira Singh which now appeared imminent. All the defence positions were, accordingly, strengthened,[69] and a large force was deployed near Jammu, at the village of Bhur.[70] Every fort which formerly belonged to Suchet Singh was also firmly secured. Samba was well fortified by Suchet Singh's widow herself.[71] Gulab Singh's supporters suggested him to take possession of Jasrota also. But this suggestion was turned down.[72] The ex-rulers of Jasrota and Basohli were, nevertheless, later released from the prison, and encouraged to recapture their former possessions.[73]

There was not even one man in the hill region of Jammu who supported the cause of Hira Singh. All clamoured for the revenge of Suchet Singh and Kesri Singh's death,[74] and the Mian Rajputs of Jammu even threatened to take Gulab Singh's life if he faltered in his resolve to bring the murderers to account.[75] Already there was great enthusiasm among Gulab Singh's followers.[76] On the advice of the Mians of Jammu, Samba and Ramnagar, he further

67. Ibid., 29 July 1844—p. 259.
68. Ibid., 19 July, 30 July 1844—pp. 252-53, 260.
69. Ibid., 5 Aug. 1844—pp. 264-65.
70. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 252.
71. Abstract of Intelligence, 3 August 1844—Gupta, H.R., op. cit., p. 263.
72. Ibid., 7 August 1844—p. 267.
73. Ibid., 20 Oct. 1844—p. 321.
74. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., pp. 299-300.
75. Abstract of Intelligence, 4 Aug. 1844—Gupta, H.R., op. cit. p. 264.
76. Ibid., 26 July, 5 Sept. 1844—pp. 258, 293.

encouraged them by distributing among them gold coins and bracelets.[77]

Hira Singh was thus practically isolated from his Rajput brethren in the hills. Even his own younger brothers, Moti Singh and Jawahar Singh, when summoned to Lahore, refused to part company with Gulab Singh,[78] and showed hostile designs towards Hira Singh.[79] On account of one reason or the other, a number of Rajput chiefs and soldiers attached to the Wazir also deserted, and joined Gulab Singh.[80]

Nor were the chiefs of the Lahore Darbar solid for Hira Singh. Directly or indirectly, Gulab Singh entered into correspondence with many of them, and received answering response from Raja Lal Singh, Sheikh Imam-ud-Din,[81] Tej Singh,[82] Dewan Sawan Mal,[83] General Kahn Singh,[84] Lehna Singh Majithia,[85] Boor Singh,[86] Sardul Singh Mann,[87] Gurdit Singh, Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din,[88] and Chhattar Singh.[89]

Despite this massive support, Gulab Singh was eager to avoid a clash with his nephew. But Pandit Jallah was the main stumbling block. If somehow or other he could be restrained, Gulab Singh believed, it would not be difficult to conciliate Hira Singh; and to achieve this end, he began with threatening and using contemptuous language towards the Pandit's family at Jammu. In retaliation,

77. Ibid., 8 Aug. 1844—p. 268.
78. Ibid., 6 July, 1, 5 Aug. 1844—pp. 240, 261, 265.
79. Ibid., 8 August 1844—p. 268.
80. Ibid., 6,26,28 July, 3 Aug., 9, 26 Sept., 7 Oct. 1844—pp. 240, 258, 259, 263, 297, 313, 329; Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 253.
81. Abstract of Intelligence, 2 Aug. 1844—p. 262.
82. Ibid., 26 Sept. 1844—p. 314.
83. Ibid., 11, 19, 26 August 1844—pp. 271, 279, 282.
84. Ibid., 19 Aug. 1844—p. 279.
85. Ibid., 26 Aug. 1844—p. 282.
86. Ibid., 4 Sept. 1844—p. 292.
87. Ibid., 28 Sept. 1844—p. 315.
88. Ibid., 4 Oct. 1844—p. 324.
89. Ibid., 15 Aug. 1844—p. 274, see also Richmond to Currie, 16 Oct. 1844, For. Sec. 23 Nov. 1844, No. 107.

Pandit Jallah resorted to his well known strategy. He urged Hira Singh to attack Jammu at once, and if this was not done, he told him. Gulab Singh would try to take the life of both of them. This expedition, he even offered to lead himself.

But the Lahore Wazir was not to be taken in so easily this time. He rejected his Deputy's proposal on the ground that neither the Darbar chiefs nor the army would support them against Gulab Singh.[90] Even if the invasion was made, he feared that the army would indulge in indiscriminate looting, plundering and pillaging the people of Jammu, which he did not want.[91]

But Jallah was persistent in his insistence. Soon after he learnt that Gulab Singh had put his family behind the bars also. Finding that Hira Singh still stood fast in his determination not to stir, he shut himself up in his house (August 5), and did not attend the Darbar also. But the Wazir even then did not bow down, and might have sacked his Deputy had he not resumed his duties after two days [92] The mortified Pandit then came up with another proposal; he asked Hira Singh to cancell all the farms held by Gulab Singh and despatch forces to Samba and Ramnagar at least.[93]

The Wazir now yielded but still partially. Only recently, he had granted the management of Hazara and Khatur to his uncle.[94] It was now withdrawn, and given back to Mulraj.[95] Gulab Singh held a jagir worth rupees five thousand in the District of Hazara. This also was resumed.[96]. Next, Suchet Singh's widow was threatened, through her brother, Raja Jagat Chand of Bilaspur, with an invasion of Samba and Ramnagar if she did not agree to the division of her husband's property.[97] A similar threat was sought to be administered to Gulab Singh also through Sheikh Imam-ud-Din. The latter was asked by Hira Singh and Pandit

90. Ibid., 5 Aug. 1844—pp. 264-65.
91. Richmond to Currie, 14 June 1844, For. Sec. 13 July 1844, No. 128.
92. Abstract of Intelligence, 5 Aug. 1844—Gupta. H.R., op. cit. p. 265.
93. Ibid., 6-8 August 1844—pp. 266-67.
94. Infra, p. 138.
95. Ibid., 10 Aug. 1844—p. 269.
96. Ibid., 11 August 1844—p. 270.
97. Ibid., 14, 28 Aug. 1644—pp. 273, 285.

Jallah to go to Jammu and ask Gulab Singh to agree not to the division but complete surrender of Suchet Singh's estates to the Lahore Darbar in accordance with the principle of escheat which had been in operation since the time of Ranjit Singh. If the Raja refused compliance, he was to be warned of serious consequences.[98]

Iman-ud-Din reached Jammu on August 20, and when he met Gulab Singh, the latter told him that as the widow of Suchet Singh was the mistress of her late husband's property, he had washed his hands of it. Gulab Singh further said that "he would not foolishly lose his life as Raja Suchet Singh had done, but would fight with Raja Hira Singh if the latter were resolved on an appeal to arms."[99] Later, however, he agreed to persuade the widow for the division of her property but only after Hira Singh had obtained in writing a demand to this effect from all the chiefs of the Lahore Darbar and officers of the Khalsa army.[100]

The mission of the Sheikh thus failed, and Pandit Jallah again harped on an invasion of Jammu. But Hira Singh preferred to use threats for some more time in order to intimidate Gulab Singh.[101]

The initiative to intimidate was, however, again taken by Gulab Singh. He opened negotations with Prince Peshora Singh, and the two arrived at an understanding, according to which the Prince was to be placed on the throne with Gulab Singh as his Wazir after a contest which was to be launched by the former and financed by the latter. A sum of rupees fifty thousand was then actually advanced by Gulab Singh to Peshora Singh, and the latter raised about one thousand men with it.[102]

98. Ibid., 13 Aug. 1844—pp. 272-73.

According to Sohan Lal Suri (op. cit., IV, p. 300), however, Imam-ud Din was required to convey to Gulab Singh a very polite message in privacy to the effect that an armed conflict between him and Hira Singh would be disgraceful for both of them, and, therefore, should be avoided ; that Hira Singh considered him his father and expected forgiveness for his past mistake.

99. Ibid., 20 Aug. 1844—p. 279, See also *Tarikh Nama*, I, pp. 400-01, 419, 428-29, quoted by Gupta, H.R., op. cit., p. lxxxvii.

100. Ibid., 4 Sept. 1844—p. 291; Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., IV, p. 300.

101. Abstract of Intelligence, 20, 25 August 1844—Gupta, H.R. op. cit., pp. 279, 282.

102. Allen, op. cit., pp. 299-300, Smyth, G.C. op. cit., p. 124-125.

Soon followed another stunning news for the men at Lahore. On August 23, Pandit Jallah was informed that some Mian Rajputs of Jammu had killed thirty members of his family. Incensed, he made a fervent appeal to Hira Singh for an immediate march upon Jammu, but the latter was not prepared to take any action in haste, and tried to appease him by every other possible means.[103]

Mian Jawahar Singh, Hira Singh's own younger brother, at this stage went all the way from Jammu to advise him for a reconciliation with Raja Gulab Singh, and "never to trust the Sikhs who would kill both him and his uncle when they might quarrel with one another." He further told his brother that Gulab Singh was unlikely to agree to a division of Suchet Singh's property; that he wanted the Ravi to be considered as the boundary of his possessions; and enjoyed the support of many chiefs of the Lahore Darbar. But Hira Singh refused to be in tune with Jawahar Singh.[104] He had made up his mind to send the Khalsa army against his uncle, and, therefore, tried to wean his brother away from the latter by such tempting offers as the grant of the title of Raja and command of the Lahore army. But it was the leave to return to Jammu immediately that Jawahar Singh wanted, and this was deferred for the time being.[105]

Having now finally decided to strike violently against Gulab Singh, Hira Singh ordered the resumption of his all jagirs and farms falling within the jurisdiction of Multan, Dera Ismail Khan and Rawalpindi.[106] The same was done in the case of Suchet Singh's jagirs in Dera Din Paneh also.[107] In pursuance of Hira Singh's earlier order withdrawing from Gulab Singh the management of Hazara, Kahn Singh Majithia succeeded in taking possession of Harkrishan Ghar, the principal fort of the area.[108] But Gulab Singh's men, led by Wazir Punu, again wrested it from him,[109]

103. Abstract of Intelligence, 23 Aug. 1844—Gupta, H.R., op. cit., pp. 280-81.
104. Ibid., 26 August 1844—pp. 282-83.
105. Ibid , 1 Sept., 27 Aug. 1844—pp. 287-88, 284.
106. Ibid., 2 Sept. 1844—p. 288.
107. Ibid., 9, 13, 17 Sept. 1844—pp. 297, 300, 305.
108. Ibid., 1 Sept. 1844—pp. 287.
109. Ibid , 2 Sept. 1844—p. 288.

established their authority throughout the District,[110] even began to collect revenue from its zamindars,[111] and made the passage of the Lahore troops to Peshawar difficult.[112] From the fort of Khushab, however, the men of Gulab Singh were driven out.[113]

On August 30, Hira Singh further ordered the Superintendent of the Magazine to manufacture one lakh of cartridges of the best quality with all possible haste.[114] But the army vacillated in its support to him. While on September 3 its officers showed great enthusiasm for his cause,[115] two days later they told him that Gulab Singh was after all his own uncle ; he should, therefore, make yet another attempt to settle the dispute with him amicably.[116]

Hira Singh, however, had by now been sufficiently goaded into taking a precipitate action. On September 6, therefore, he ordered four regiments of infantry and one of cavalry, under Dewan Jodha Ram, to march and encamp on the other side of the Ravi, and proceed onwards to Jammu in stages. But the army halted after covering a short distance, and refused to march further until the other regiments had also joined them and all had debated the issue.[117] The next day, therefore, all the other regiments also then stationed at the capital were ordered to move. The Khalsa troops, however, did not like to be involved in a dispute which they considered was a personal one between Gulab Singh and Hira Singh ; and General Gulab Singh Pohovindia apprised the Lahore Wazir and his Deputy with these feelings of the men. But Pandit Jallah told him that the dispute was actually between the Lahore Darbar and Raja Gulab Singh as the latter had been called upon to surrender Suchet Singh's estates and pay arrears of revenue to the Darbar ; to agree to an increase in the amount of contracts of his farms, as others had done ; and to attend the Darbar as other chiefs did.[118] But the troops still hesitated to march.[119]

110. Ibid., 4 Sept. 1844—p. 290.
111. Ibid., 6 Sept. 1844—p. 294.
112. Ibid., 23 Oct. 1844—p. 340.
113. Ibid., 18, 20 Sept. 1844—pp. 306-07.
114. Ibid , 30 Aug. 1844—p. 286.
115. Ibid., 3 Sept. 1844—p. 389, Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., IV. p. 301.
116. Abstract of Intelligence, 5 Sept. 1844—Gupta, H.R. op. cit., p. 293.
117. Ibid., 6 Sept. 1844—p. 294.
118. Ibid., 7 Sept. 1844—pp. 295-96; Smyth, G.C., op. cit., pp. 121-22.
119. Abstract of Intelligence, 8, 12 Sept. 1844—Gupta, H.R. op. cit., pp. 296, 299.

For some time past, Gulab Singh had been urging Hira Singh to dismiss Pandit Jallah. Of late, however, he had demanded the surrender of this evil genius to him.[120] It was, however, not only to Gulab Singh but many others that the Pandit had rendered himself a persona non grata, and all of them believed that no peace and tranquility was possible till he lived. Some chiefs of the Lahore Darbar are, therefore, said to have planned to assassinate him.[121] Even Gulab Singh himself, it is said, might have gone to Lahore in order to cut him with his own hands, but he feared that he might lose his own life also at the hands of those Sikhs who were inimical to him.[122] That is probably why, after he had failed to move Hira Singh in the matter, he addressed, in the beginning of September, several letters to the officers of the Lahore army, seeking their help in seizing the Pandit, and promissing to reward their services by increasing the pay of an infantryman to rupees fifteen and that of a cavalryman to thirty per month, besides granting jagirs and other honours to the officers.[123]

No wonder, on September 12, General Mehtab Singh Majithia told Hira Singh on his face that there was no dearth of men like Pandit Jallah, and many better than him also could be easily had ; he should not, therefore, fight with his uncle for the sake of this man ; he had better hand over the Pandit to Gulab Singh, and thereby finish the main cause of friction with him. But absolutely irrevocable was the resolve of Hira Singh ; "he would never forsake Pandit Jallah", he said, "and whatever he had was all the Pandit's by whose advice he would be guided in all things."[124]

The attitude of the army and a joint representation soon after by Bhai Ram Singh, Dewan Dina Nath, Faquir Nur-ud-Din, Sheikh Iman-ud-Din and Jodha Ram, besides another by Mian Jawahar Singh, however, left Hira Singh with no option but to send another mission for talks with Gulab Singh.[125]

120. Ibid., 12 Aug 1844—p. 272.
121. Ibid , 8, 5 Sept., 12 June 1844 – pp. 297, 293, 214.
122. Richmond to Currie, 14 June 1844, For. Sec. 13 July 1844, No. 128; Ibid, 13 Aug 1844, For. Sec. 21 Sept 1844. No. 118.
123. Abstract of Intelligence, 3, 12 Sept. 1844—Gupta. H.R., op. cit., pp. 288-89, 299.
124. Ibid., 12 Sept. 1844—p. 300.
125. Ibid., 8 Sept. 1844—pp. 296-97.

The mission, comprising the first four of the above mentioned chiefs, reached Jammu in the middle of September. But Gulab Singh, plainly told the visiting chiefs that so long as Pandit Jallah was at the helm of affairs, there could be no peace or security.[126] Hence, he desired that before any settlement of the dispute was arrived at, the Pandit should be either made over to him[127] or sent to Benaras. He further told the mission that if Hira Singh attacked him, the Afghans, the British and the Khalsa themselves would come to his rescue, and the people of Jammu would put the family and other relatives of Jallah to death.[128] He also showed them a document executed by Dhian Singh, which stated that after his death his possessions should be shared only by Jawahar Singh and Moti Singh, because Hira Singh had already amassed a fortune.[129]

The Lahore chiefs acquainted their Wazir with the views of Gulab Singh, and, while awaiting reply from him, went on a pilgrimage to Vaishno Devi[130] and also inspected the troops (about fifty thousand infantry and cavalry with two hundred guns and six hundred swivels) which Gulab Singh paraded before them.[131]

Obviously, there was no meeting ground between the two sides, and both declared that any further talks would bring good to none.[132] The Lahore mission then wanted to return. But Gulab Singh allowed it not to depart. At Lahore, Hira Singh had detained Mian Jawahar Singh against his will, and refused him permission to leave for Jammu in spite of several communications from Gulab Singh also.[133] Availing the present opportunity, Gulab Singh made it known that he would allow the mission to quit Jammu only if Jawahar Singh was permitted to return from Lahore.[134]

Preparations to meet the impending invasion of Jammu were also simultaneously resumed by Gulab Singh and directed, as in

126. Ibid., 16 Sept., 1844—p. 303.
127. Ibid., 17 Sept. 1844—p. 304.
128. Ibid., 18 Sept. 1844—pp. 305-06.
129. Ibid., 19 Sept. 1844—p. 306.
130. Ibid., 23 Sept. 1844—p. 310.
131. Ibid., 24 Sept. 1844—p. 311.
132. Ibid., 17, 18, 25 Sept., 20 Oct. 1844—pp. 304, 306, 312, 320.
133. Ibid., 20, 27 Sept. 1844—pp. 307-08.
134. Ibid., 25 Sept. 1844—p. 312.

the past, at strengthening his own position and undermining that of his adversary. Either through correspondence or by despatching personal emissaries, he stirred on all sides the enemies of the Lahore Darbar. Malik Fateh Khan of Tiwana, Habibullah Khan, the jagirdar of Pakhli, Hassan Khan and Painda Khan of Darband.[135] and Arsilla Khan of Zeidah created disturbances in their territories.[136] These chiefs, along with their followers, further intended to come down to Jammu to render active military assistance to Gulab Singh. The people of the Chibhal territory, between the rivers Chenab and Jehlum, also began to commit depradations.[137]

Chhattar Singh Attariwala was a close friend of Gulab Singh, and both had entered into a bond of brotherhood by exchanging their turbans.[138] He held a high position in the Lahore Darbar also. On the request of Gulab Singh, he left Peshawar and created disorder in the Pothohar District (West of Jehlum),[139] and in the territories lying between the Chenab and the Indus[140] and between Rohtas and Rawalpindi.[141] He also made available to his friend the services of three hundred men who were put on the defence of Samba.[142]

On the advice of Gulab Singh, Gurdit Singh also, brother-in-law of late Kharrak Singh, collected four thousand men at Kotahwala, a district east of the Chenab, and tried to levy exactions in that territory.[143] Tej Singh, the Governor of Peshawar, allowed Gulab Singh's men to loot the treasure which was meant to be sent to Lahore.[144]

Assurances of support were reported to have been received also from a number of the Panjab hill states, the jagirdars of the

135. Ibid., 18 August, 22 Sept. 1844—pp. 277, 308-09.
136. Ibid., 11 Sept. 1844—p. 298.
137. Ibid., 6 Sept. 1844—pp. 294-95.
138. Ibid., 15 Aug. 1844—p. 274.
139. Ibid , 22 Sept. 1844—p. 309.
140. Ibid., 3 Oct. 1844—p. 323.
141. Ibid., 6, 5 Oct., 29 Sept. 1844—pp. 328, 326, 317.
142. Ibid., 2 Oct. 1844—p. 320.
143. Ibid., 4 Oct. 1844—p. 324.
144. Ibid., 26 Sept. 1844—p. 314.

Jullundur Doab,[145] the chiefs of Swat, Boner, Kashghar and Dir, and even Dost Muhammad Khan of Kabul.[146]

Recently, the Lahore Darbar had dismissed some European officers of the army. Gulab Singh opened negotiations with them also in order to engage them in his service.[147] Even to Rani Jindan he tried to send a message that "Raja Hira Singh had nominated her son as ruler of the Punjab but had taken to himself all authority in the country and that if she would give assistance to him, he (Gulab Singh) would try to remove his nephew from the Court."[148]

Pandit Jallah's family at Jammu was also again harassed and intimidated. Sometime in the beginning of September, his two brothers, Charan Das and Ram Kishan, had tried to escape to Lahore, but their attempt was foiled, property confiscated, and they were cast into the prison.[149] A few days later were erected fourteen gallows, and the Pandit's family members were told that as soon as Lahore army commenced its march upon Jammu, they would be hanged upon them.[150] Food was also denied to them for a few days.[151] Pandit Jallah, however, counselled them to take heart, assuring them that soon he "would bring about the ruin of the Raja and raze to the ground all his dwelling places."[152] But his brothers informed him that even his own life was in danger as Gulab Singh had deputed twenty men to do away with him. The Pandit also is said to have sent some men to Jammu to cut short the life of Gulab Singh.[153]

The things having come to this pass, Gulab Singh prepared to send away for safety his own family as well as those of his relatives, friends and several hill chiefs to Riasi.[154]

145. Ibid., 12 Sept. 1844—pp. 299-300.
146. Ibid., 27 Sept. 2 Oct. 1844—pp. 314, 320.
147. Richmond to Currie, 16 Oct. 1844—For. Sec. 23 Nov. 1844, No. 107.
148. Abstract of Intelligence, 23 Sept. 1844—Gupta, H.R. op. cit., p. 311.
149. Ibid., 16 Sept. 1844—p. 303.
150. Ibid., 28 Sept. 1844—p. 316.
151. Ibid., 3 Oct. 1844—p. 324.
152. Ibid., 28 Sept. 1844—p. 316.
153. Ibid., 5 Oct. 1844—p. 326.
154. Ibid., 1 Oct. 1844—pp. 319-20.

Hira Singh, however, had not as yet fully overcome the reluctance of his troops to clash with the Jammu Raja. Lack of much experience in hill warfare was said to be yet another reason which was putting a damper on their spirits. The men of General Mehtab Singh had even begun to discuss the desirability of edging Hira Singh out of his position and bringing Gulab Singh in[155], while those of General Gurdit Singh put the condition that they would march only if both the Wazir and his Deputy themselves led them.[156]

Under these circumstances, Hira Singh and Pandit Jallah thought of playing upon the fears and prejudices of the Khalsa army. In a meeting convened on October 1 of their officers and Panchas, they told them that not only had Gulab Singh refused to listen to their calls to surrender to the Darbar the estates and treasure of his late brothers and pay the revenues due from him, but also had instigated many men to disturb peace in the kingdom. Hence, he deserved chastisement. They further stated that unless he was forced to pay his revenues, they would not be in a position to meet even the daily expenses of the government. Immediately there were shouts of approval, and the officers wanted to know why had not they been earlier commanded to march upon Jammu. A proclamation was, accordingly issued, declaring a punitive action against[157] Gulab Singh. As in the cases of Suchet Singh and the Sindhanwalias, no sooner had it been given out that they were supported by the British than the Khalsa troops had brought into play their full energy and destroyed them, now also it was said that the Jammu Raja "really wished that the English should possess the Panjab."[158]

The die having thus been cast, the order of the march was determined upon, and Hira Singh ordered that his own tents also should be pitched on the north bank of the Ravi.[159] But on October 4 came the information from Bhai Ram Singh and Dewan Dina Nath that Gulab Singh had ultimately agreed in writing and

155 Ibid., 24 Sept. 1844—p. 311.
156. Ibid., 28 Sept. 1844—p. 316.
157. Ibid., 1 Oct. 1844—p. 319.
158. Ibid., 30 Sept. 1844—p. 318.
159. Ibid., 2 Oct. 1844—pp. 320-21, See also Ibid., Sept. 3, 28—pp. 289-90, 316.

on oaths to "yield to the terms in question (which had been proposed by the Darbar) in the manner his nephew Mian Jawahar Singh might advise him on his arrival at Jammu." The further progress of the troops was then immediately halted,[160] and, after Mian Jawahar Singh had assured Pandit Jallah that he would not agree to any term prejudicial to the latter,[161] the former was allowed to go to Jammu to clinch the issue.

Jawahar Singh first of all secured the release of Jallah's family,[162] and then entered into a detailed discussion with his uncle. The matter had by now become a little complicated one, and required all the diplomatic skill on the part of Gulab Singh to bring it to a satisfactory close. In the first place, the widow of Suchet Singh was dead set against Hira Singh. The feelings of the Mian Rajputs of the Jammu hills also had been so much roused that it was not easy to bring them round to a compromise with the murderers of Suchet Singh and Kesri Singh. Lastly, Gulab Singh had to safeguard the interests of those chiefs of the Lahore Darbar who had supported him during this struggle.

To the chiefs, the Jammu Raja assured full protection,[163] and actually asked Jawahar Singh to write to Hira Singh that he should allow them to join their jagirs.[164] As the Mian Rajputs were more hostile towards Pandit Jallah than Hira Singh,[165] Gulab Singh tried to satisfy them by asking the Lahore Wazir to dismiss his Deputy while talks for the settlement of the basic issues went on.[166] The main difficulty was, however, presented by Suchet Singh's widow. With due regards for her sentiments, Gulab Singh suggested Hira Singh to let her husband's possessions remain with her till she lived, and offered to pay himself the revenue due from her.[167] But Hira Singh pressed for the transfer of these to him.[168]

160. Ibid,, 4, 19 Oct. 1844—pp. 325, 363.
161. Ibid., October 6-8, 1844—pp. 328-30.
162. Ibid., 17-18 Oct. 1844—p. 335.
163. Ibid., 21, 27, 29-30 Oct. 1844—pp. 338, 345, 347-48.
164. Ibid., 26 Oct. 1844—p. 344.
165. Ibid., 18 Oct. 1844—p. 335.
166. Ibid., 23-24 Oct. 1844—pp. 340-42.
167. Ibid., 18 Oct. 1844—p. 335.
168. Ibid., 19 Oct. 1844—p. 336.

Gulab Singh then proposed that at least the fort and district of Suchetgarh should be assigned to her for her maintenance and the rest of her husband's estates be divided equally between himself and Hira Singh [169] The widow and the managers of her husband's estates were almost simultaneously told that in view of his final settlement with the Lahore Darbar, they should permit the agents of Mian Jawahar Singh to occupy the forts of Samba and Bhadoo.[170] A little later, Gulab Singh himself also intended to go to Samba to see that his sister-in-law did accordingly.[171]

Both the sides, thus sincerely wishing to split their differences, ultimately agreed to divide equally between themselves all the property and estates of Suchet Singh, after assigning a maintenance of thirty-five thousand rupees in land to the widow. An understanding with regard to the Ferozepur treasure also was reached between them. The cost of the military contingent to be kept by the Jammu Rajas for the service of the Lahore Darbar was to be shared equally by them. Gulab Singh was further required to render the account of revenues due from him, and raise the amount of his contracts.[172] The jagirs and farms which had been either cancelled or withdrawn during the conflict were restored to him.[173]

In order to ratify this agreement on behalf of Gulab Singh, his son, Mian Sohan Singh, arrived at Lahore on November 1. The members of the Lahore mission, who had come to Jammu in the middle of September, also returned with him.[174] Hira Singh sent a number of chiefs of note to receive the Mian, and guns boomed out as he entered the Lahore fort. The former further expressed his happiness by embracing his cousin and declaring that "by the grace of God peace had become established between them and thanked God that though some of the mischievous persons had brought about a breach between them, yet the dispute

169. Ibid., 24 Oct. 1844—p. 342.
170. Ibid., 23 Oct. 1844—p. 340.
171. Ibid., 26 Oct. 1844—p. 344.
172. Richmond to Currie, 30 Oct. 1844, For. Sec. 23 Nov. 1844, No. 108; D-50, Patiala Archives.
173. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 253.
174. Abstract of Intelligence, 29 Oct. 1844—Gupta, H.R, op. cit., p. 347.

among them came to an end and relations of peace and association became established between them."[175]

Gulab Singh's decision to climb down from his original stand, it appears, was much influenced by the developments on the frontier of Ladakh. Making capital out of his difficulties, the Tibetans had assembled a strong force of about twenty thousand men, and intended to invade Ladakh as soon as the Lahore army marched upon Jammu.[176] In the face of this threat, to prolong and aggravate his differences with his nephew would have been suicidal for Gulab Singh. The Lahore Darbar also was keen to end the dispute as it apprehended some trouble from the British who had at this time collected an army within a few easy marches of the Sutlej.[177] Yet another factor which prompted both the sides to kiss and again be friends was the danger of losing Peshawar. Had Gulab Singh and Hira Singh resorted to arms, Dost Muhammad of Kabul must have made a stab to fulfil his long cherished desire of reoccupying that place. The Muslim population on either side of the Indus also was likely to foment trouble.[178] And neither Gulab Singh nor Hira Singh wanted all this to happen.

175. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., IV, p. 305.
Some writers are of the opinion that the differences between Gulab Singh and Hira Singh were all pretended and not real. In the words of G.C. Smyth : "Those well informed on the subject believe that though some slight misunderstanding may have existed in respect of money matters—Gulab Singh claiming the property of Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh, his brothers, and even keeping his hold of some of that entrusted to his care by his nephew—the display of hostility originated in that crooked policy for which the Dogra chiefs were notorious, and was merely intended as a blind to the world at large." (Smyth, G.C., op. cit., p. 121 : See also Richmond to Currie, 29 Sept. 1844, For. Sec. 15 June, 1844, No. 197).

176. Abstract of Intelligence, 27 Sept., 4 Oct. 1844—Gupta, H.R. op. cit. pp. 314, 324.

177. Allen, op. cit., p. 301, Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset*, pp. 82-83.

178. Richmond to Currie, 30 Oct. 1844, For. Sec. 23 Nov. 1844, No. 108.

Pandit Jallah was, however, not much concerned with the above mentioned developments, and tried to cross Hira Singh's path for selfish reasons, But the latter disregarded him, and went ahead with his plans to patch up with his uncle.[179] His uncle was, however, not the only one with whom Hira Singh happened to be at daggers drawn. The Pandit, on account of his offensive and overbearing attitude, had, in fact, made too many enemies both for himself and the Wazir to live in peace. Working up the feelings of these men, Sardar Jawahar Singh, brother of Rani Jindan, now tried to obtain for himself the office of the Wazir.

We have already noted that Jawahar Singh was imprisoned soon after Hira Singh had come to power, but subsequently released on the intercession of the army. He then retired to Amritsar and occupied himself in intrigues against the Jammu Rajas. A plot even to assassinate Hira Singh was hatched out by him. But the assassins divulged it to the former,[180] and a number of Lahore chiefs too were found to be involved in it.[181] After sometime, he returned to the capital to find that some chiefs and army officers also were willing to rally round him. Even Raja Lal Singh, a trusted friend of Hira Singh,[182] entered into a secret pact with Jawahar Singh, and day by day the following of the latter swelled. That was the time when Jawahar should have been conciliated, but Pandit Jallah now began to treat him with open contempt. On December 1, 1844, even Rani Jindan was publicly insulted by the Pandit. When she complained to her brother, he became furious, and many soldiers and chiefs of the Lahore Darbar, including Dina Nath, Faqir Aziz-ud-Din and Bhai Ram Singh, shared his indignation.[183]

179. Abstract of Intelligence, 20, 22, 24 Oct. 1844, Gupta, H.R., op. cit. pp. 337-39, 341-342.
180. Ibid., 18 July 1844, p. 251.
181. Ibid., 19, 25 July 1844, pp. 252-53, 257.
182. It was Hira Singh who had made him Raja, and Gulab Singh had then prophesied with remarkable accuracy that "two Rajas will never survive at Lahore." (Tarikh Nama, pp. 420-21, quoted by Satinder Singh, Bawa, op. cit. p. 71).
183. Broadfoot to Currie, 29 Dec. 1844, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 44.

The climax was reached on December 18 when Hira Singh, while disbursing the pay to the Charyari troops, discharged about five hundred men on the spot. They might have been disloyal, as they were believed to be, but their dismissal aroused the suspicion that the Wazir and his Deputy were trying to save and collect as much money as possible with the ultimate intention of retiring to Jammu. "This made the timid abandon them, and exasperated the soldiery."

The next day, the officers of the army advised Hira Singh to appease both the Rani and her brother. The Wazir agreed, but actually did nothing, and attended only to the army. Burning with the feelings of revenge, Rani Jindan, on December 20, sent Sardar Jawahar Singh and her slave Mangla to the army lines, declaring that her life was in danger. Excited, the army at once resolved to protect her, and two companies from each brigade actually marched into the city fort, where she resided.

Alarmed at these developments, Gulab Singh sent from Jammu, on December 21, Mian Jawahar Singh, with seven thousand men, for the support of Hira Singh.[184] But the Wazir's cause had by now become so hopeless that any further stay at the capital was likely to cost him as well as his Deputy his life. Hence, both of them, along with Mian Sohan Singh, who was still there, Mian Labh Singh and a few hundred soldiers, carrying all their valuables, trooped out of Lahore in the morning of December 21, on the pretext of joining Maharaja Dalip Singh and Rani Jindan. But hardly had they passed the Taxila Gate when their ears met the sound of trumpets saluting Sardar Jawahar Singh as the new Lahore Wazir in the army camps. Naturally, they sprinted up. But soon was flashed to the military lines the news of their flight, and a body of six thousand troops under Sham Singh Attariwala and Raja Lal Singh was sent in their pursuit. The money bags were then flung open and gold coins cast down by Hira Singh in order to divert the pursuers' attention. The strategy succeeding, was repeated, but the odds were overwhelmingly against the fugitives, with the result that soon a number of them were overtaken beyond Shahdara, and cut down. Pandit Jallah's strength

184. Ibid.

having petered out, he fell down from his horse, and was instantly removed from life. In the meantime, Sardar Jawahar Singh also came up running with more troops, and, in the brief but furious contest which ensued, all the chiefs from Jammu and many of their followers lost their lives.

The heads of the slain were taken to the city as trophies, and hung up at several gates. That of Pandit Jallah was, however, carried for some days from house to house and shop to shop to be exposed to the public view against a small fee. Next, it was thrown on a heap of rubbish and filth to be spit at, and ultimately given to the dogs. The heads of Hira Singh and Sohan Singh also were, after some time, thrown into a ditch outside the city fort, but later deposited in the private rooms of the late Dhian Singh, while their bodies were left to be eaten by wild beasts and birds.[185]

Thus ended the Wazarat and lives of Hira Singh, once a darling of the Khalsa army, and Pandit Jallah, who had become a terror to everyone till he lived. But with them also ended the Dogra ascendency in the Panjab. In was indeed owing to Hira Singh's prowess and heroism that the Jammu family had retained power in its hands after the sudden death of Dhian Singh. But being young and inexperienced, he could not maintain his position for long. The unity in the Jammu family, which more than anything else had contributed towards its rise to power, also began to crack up soon after, and Hira Singh's conflict which followed first with Suchet Singh and then with Gulab Singh shattered the power of the Dogras so much that, as we shall subsequently see, their opponents were encouraged to try to beard the lion also in his den.

185. Latif, S.M., op. cit., pp. 529-31.

CHAPTER NINE

Jammu Raj in Jeopardy

It is always easier to pull down than to build, and this is exactly what was done in the Panjab when Hira Singh was put to death. As his power rested upon no solid foundation, a small coterie of self-seeking chiefs, the Rani and the army found it astonishingly easy to end the Dogra hegemony in the Lahore Darbar. But there were no alternative plans for the erection of a new fabric of government, nor were the interests of the various constituents of this combination identical. The result was the virtual absence of any government in the Panjab for a pretty long time.

Immediately after the death of Hira Singh, Sardar Jawahar Singh went to his house, and appropriated his treasure worth about rupees thirty lakhs.[1] And on December 23, 1844, a grand Darbar was held at which all congratulated one another "upon the emancipation of the State from the oppressions of the Dogra family."

1. Allen, op. cit., p. 305 ; Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset*, p. 90.

Jawahar Singh, the chief architect of the revolution, naturally hoped to become the Wazir, and Rani Jindan actually proposed his name. But neither the army nor the chiefs were prepared to accept the son of a Kennelkeeper in this position. A working council was then set up with the Rani as President, Jawahar Singh and Bhai Ram Singh as the members, and Bakshi Bhagat Ram, Dewan Dina Nath and Faqir Nur-ud-Din as senior secretaries.[2]

The President wished everybody joy of this occasion. So, the prison doors were flung open, fines were remitted, taxes were reduced, and jagirs, farms and monopolies restored; "every unpopular act of the late Ministry" was, in short, undone. Some persons wanted her to delay these measures. But "amidst the applause of interested persons," no heed was paid to their advice.

After a few days of rejoicings, however, the army again went on a rampage. They began to beat and expel the officers who were formerly attached to Hira Singh, burn down their houses, and even violate the modesty of their wives and daughters. The women about to commit Sati were also deprived of their belongings. And when the Rani, in the company of her son, Maharaja Dalip Singh, went to the camp of these violent troops in order to bring them to reason, she was told :

> They were the Singhs, but would suffer her son to reign, provided he paid as regularly as Hira Singh, and if he did not, they would find a substitute; they reminded her that Peshora Singh was the elder, and would pay well; they said that her brothers were unfit to be Ministers being always drunk, and told her to send for Lehna Singh Majithia, who was a proper minister, being afraid to lift his eyes in their presence.

Some chiefs, who also had accompanied her, stood all through "with joined hands, as suppliants before the troops, and finally with the terrified Rani returned amidst the laughter, and hooting of the drunken crowd."

To pacify the troops, the Darbar immediately issued three months' pay, of which one was a donation and another advance.[3]

2. Allen, op.cit., pp. 307-09 ; Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset*, pp. 90-91.
3. Broadfoot to Currie, 29 Dec. 1844, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 44.

The army was, however, far from satisfied. But the government also could not afford to meet their further demands unless it got more money from somewhere, and except Gulab Singh, it could think of no other source to get it. The Raja, having accumulated huge wealth, had since long been an object of envy to the Darbar. Now grief-sticken for the loss of his second son, he was further believed to be within an inch of his life, and, therefore, incapable of offering any resistance. Hence, Rani Jindan and Jawahar Singh commanded him to surrender immediately to the Darbar all the property of Hira Singh. Before a reply was, however, received from Gulab Singh, they also ordered a force to proceed to Jasrota and seize Hira Singh's treasure lying there.[4]

But the troops refused to stir even a finger unless they got a further raise in their pay. So great was their resentment that they told both the Rani and her brother on the face that they were unfit to govern and, therefore, should be chained or put to death, and that Peshora Singh should be raised to the throne.[5]

Letters were then actually sent to Peshora Singh and Lehna Singh, who were staying at Ferozepur and Benaras respectively as exiles owing to the actions of the army itself. While the former was invited to become the Commander-in-Chief of the army, the latter was to fill the post of the Wazir, which still lay vacant.[6] But when the Prince arrived at Lahore (January 1, 1845), they began bargaining with him as well as the Rani. Frightened,the Rani, at one stage, thought of sending an emissary to the British Agent at Ludhiana with a proposal for a subsidiary force.[7] But ultimately she got the better of her rival by digging into her purse more deeply, and both she and the army advised Peshora Singh to retire from Lahore in his own interest. A golden key, no doubt, opens every door, and the reputed son of Ranjit Singh was not so foolish as Suchet Singh to have held his ground stubbornly.

At Jammu, when Gulab Singh had learnt of the murder of his nephew and son, he had applied to the Darbar for the head of the

4. Ibid ; Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., IV, p. 313.
5. Broadfoot to Currie, 30 Dec. 1844, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 46.
6. Allen, op. cit., p. 307.
7. Broadfoot to Currie, 5 Jan. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 62.

latter. But this request was turned down. Obviously, his enemies were out to kick up a row with him, and he also did not fail to perceive it. Working on a premonition that Jasrota would be their first target of attack, he sent there a detachment under Mian Jawahar Singh, his second nephew, to bring away all the family treasure and valuables to Jammu.[8]

The demand of the Lahore Darbar was soon after conveyed to him through two emissaries, Lala Rattan Chand Duggal and Bawa Mian Singh. After expressing regrets for the death of Mian Sohan Singh, they told Gulab Singh that Rani Jindan and Jawahar Singh had called upon him to surrender not only the whole of Hira Singh's property and half of that of Suchet Singh, which also had fallen to his share,[9] but the person of Mian Jawahar Singh as well. Gulab Singh's own jagirs and other possessions were, however, confirmed.

But the Jammu Raja refused to comply with the demand of his nephew's surrender, and decided to meet the Lahore army on the battlefield. Instructions were, accordingly, sent to the Mian to prepare for the defence of Jasrota. Mian Ranbir Singh, his only surviving son, then stationed at Ramnagar, and all the commanders also were asked to gird up for the war. Dewan Hari Chand, who was at Gurhi, and Wazir Lakhpat, who had gone to Khori for the relief of Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din, were simultaneously recalled to Jammu.[10]

In all, Gulab Singh mustered about 25,000 men, armed chiefly with firelocks of long range and partly with matchlocks.[11] Thus

8. Ibid., 30 Dec. 1844, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 46.
9. According to some scholars, however, the demand included the surrender of all the property of Suchet Singh and Hira Singh and also a fine of rupees three crores. (Latif, S.M. op. cit., p. 532 ; Smyth, G.C., op. cit., p. 134 ; Panikar, K.M, op. cit., p. 66).
10. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 259-60, 265.
11. Broadfoot to Currie, 4 Feb. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No 115. Hardinge was not sure but he believed that Gulab Singh had also sent his treasure for safe keeping in the British territory. (Hardinge to Ellenborough, 23 Jan. 1845—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, p. 82).

prepared for war, he did not altogether give up his efforts for peace also. One after another, he sent confidential messengers to the Lahore Darbar with assurances of his allegiance,[12] and wanted in return only the confirmation of his possessions. The Darbar, no doubt, granted his request, but at the same time the force ordered to go to Jasrota was more than doubled ; the widow of Suchet Singh was declared her husband's heir, and promised to be placed in possession of his estates ; Ranjoor Singh Majithia, the brother of Lehna Singh, was appointed to govern the hill territory after its conquest; and all the petty Rajas were ordered to team up with the army of invasion, which was expected to bring so much wealth as to enable the Darbar "to pay the army for ten years, leaving the whole revenue to them."[13]

It is apparent that neither of the parties was sincere in its intentions and prepared "to be bound by any of the many engagements made, and sworn to and altered, or reckoned on the same day." It is said that Gulab Singh's sole object was to gain time for the completion of his preparations for the forthcoming war, and, with this object in view, he tried to distract "the imbecile government with a variety of spacious proposals", and, simultaneously, frightened it with reports of divisions in his favour in Peshawar and the Derajat. He is also said to have won a number of important chiefs of the Lahore Darbar by the promises of huge bribes, and Bhai Ram Singh and Dewan Dina Nath are reported to have actually received bonds for several lakhs of rupees to be redeemed after the dispute was settled.[14]

The policy which Gulab Singh had at this time adopted was indeed a tangled one. Writing to Frederick Currie, Secretary to the Government of India, Richmond said on January 16 :

> Raja Gulab Singh continues to make in public professions of submission to the Darbar and of being broken hearted, and desires only of dying in peace, but he is preparing with unweaned energy for war, and is stirring up every enemy to the Sikhs and every ally to himself that his messengers can

12. Broadfoot to Currie, 1 Jan. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 47.
13. Ibid., 2 Jan. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 49.
14. Ibid., 4 and 5 Jan. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, Nos. 56 and 62 respectively.

reach......and day after day his Agents offer and receive fresh terms of submission which are duly discussed by the Council.[15]

The result of this diplomacy was that the march of the Lahore army upon Jasrota was not conducted in a satisfactory manner. The command of the expedition was first entrusted to Ranjoor Singh. He did well in the beginning, and took possession of Basohli, not by assault, however, but by seducing its small garrison of about one hundred men with promises of higher pay and presents. The hillmen then resorted to surpise attacks at night, and he also was bogged down. In one of such attacks alone, he lost at many as one hundred of his followers. Reinforcements were subsequently sent under General Rattan Singh Mann. But he too was rendered inactive by the hillmen, and lost his heart completely when out of 3 or 4 thousand of his men all but 1,200 deserted him.[16]. Next, it was the turn of Sham Singh Attariwala. He exerted himself vigorously, and, reaching within a few miles of Jasrota, made himself master of several small forts and seized some treasure also from there. But he pulled up the Darbar also for its half-hearted measures, and asked for reinforcements with authority to exercise command over all other troops.

Alarmed at his progress, Gulab Singh picked up Chattar Singh Attariwala, who was related to Sham Singh and had taken refuge at Jammu before the death of Hira Singh, and sent him to Lahore to get the hostilities suspended. As a result of Attariwala's talks, the Darbar drew up a document on January 14, which said that, first, Gulab Singh would hand over to it the goods, jagirs and forts which formerly belonged to Hira Singh and Suchet Singh; secondly, the territories held by him in farm and the salt mines would remain with him but on the raised rates as had been fixed by Pandit Jallah; thirdly, Dhian Singh's jagirs and property would be bestowed upon his sons, Jawahar Singh and Moti Singh, on the payment of a fixed tribute and on the condition that they would render military service to the Darbar ; fourthly, the jagirs and perquisites of Gulab Singh would be confirmed, but he also might be called upon for military service to the Darbar ; and, finally, the

15. For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 102.
16. Broadfoot to Currie, 10 Jan. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 76.

Darbar might confer the territories of late Suchet Singh upon his widow.

This document was, however, deposited with Bhai Ram Singh to be delivered to Gulab Singh only after the latter had complied with the prescribed conditions.[17]

The Darbar was at this time getting very desperate for want of money in order to gratify the ever expanding demands of the troops. In the government treasury was hardly enough money to pay them even for two months.[18] The submission of Gulab Singh was, therefore, received with great enthusiasm. The Raja also was satisfied, for owing to more than one reasons he wanted to avoid an immediate rupture with the Darbar. The one, as already said, was the need for some additional time to complete his preparations for the war. Secondly, his position was weakened owing to some desertions. Before his death, Hira Singh had collected at Jasrota some force with a view to invading Chamba. It was commanded by a Sikh officer named Attar Singh. On the approach of the Lahore troops, he and his men joined them. Some hillmen also then deserted to the enemy.[19] More damaging than these desertions were, however, the differences which now cropped up between Gulab Singh and Mian Jawahar Singh.

Sometime earlier, Sham Singh Attariwala had tried to lure the Mian's men with the promise of a higher pay. To counteract this move, Jawahar Singh also announced a raise in the pay of his men. But Gulab Singh did not approve of his action, with the result that the Mian was put in a very embarrassing position. Already had he been nursing a feeling of resentment against his uncle on account of the fact that the latter had been treating him as a younger and subordinate member of his family and not as an independent successor of his late father. Now, therefore, he became inclined to

17. Ibid., 16 Jan. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, Nos. 102-103.
18. According to the report of Broadfoot to Currie, dated 11th Feb. 1845, the government treasury did not contain more than rupees twelve lakhs. (For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 129).
19. Symth, G.C, op. cit., p. 133.

deal separately with the Lahore Darbar,[20] and actually opened negotiations with Sham Singh for the evacuation of Jasrota.

While these talks were still going on, a news was flashed to the Darbar that the Mian had defected to its side. So great was the joy at Lahore that the enemies of Gulab Singh became oblivious of the recent agreement concluded with him and again talked of launching an attack on Jammu with the treasure and assistance of Mian Jawahar Singh. But only a day later the fallacy was discovered when they suffered from a fit of nerves, and begged Bhai Ram Singh to undertake a mission to Jammu in order to secure the execution of the said agreement. It was then the turn of the Bhai who not only refused to mediate but also tried to send a message to the British Political Agent to the effect that :

> he was prepared to obtain and transmit to me (the Agent) a written engagement from Raja Gulab Singh stipulating in return for our aid to cede the possessions of the Lahore Government on the south side of the Sutlej, any other limited territory on the north of the Sutlej, and fifty lakhs of rupees[21].

If Mian Jawahar Singh soon returned to the fold of obedience to his uncle, many men of the former did, in the meantime, desert to the Lahore army. Even his manager of Jasrota, Wazir Bachna, joined the opposite camp. The Mian's position thus became untenable[22]. Gulab Singh, therefore, thought it better to hand over Jasrota himself to the Lahore troops, and, accordingly, sent word to his nephew to do so in pursuance of the agreement of January 14. Jawahar Singh obeyed, and retraced his steps to Jammu with the family and a large portion of the treasure of Hira Singh[23].

20. Broadfoot to Currie, 22 Jan. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 110.
21. Ibid., 25 Jan. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 111.
22. Kirpa Ram, op. cit , p. 260.
23. Broadfoot to Currie, 25 Jan. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845. No. 111.
According to Allen (pp. 310-11), Sham Singh got possession of Jasrota "by the usual treachery, the troops offering to place the Mian in the office of Vuzeer, upon condition that he paid down a certain sum, and engaged to raise their pay. Young Jawahar believing this offer to be as sincere as it was characteristic, fell into the snare, and admitted a party of the troops into the fort ; but soon discovering his error, he fled to Jammu."

As ho es of the Lahore troops of finding an immense treasure in the Jasrota fort had been raised very high, almost every nook and corner of the place was ransacked. Their booty was, however, no more than a quarter and two lakhs of rupees, besides some military stores and grain. Highly incensed at this anticlimax, the troops became impatient to march on Jammu to teach Gulab Singh a lesson for his contumacious conduct. The provincial governors were directed to look upon him as an enemy of the Darbar. Raja Rahimullah[24] Khan of Rajouri, then at Lahore, was asked to whip up, through his sons, an insurrection in the hill dependencies of Dhian Singh, which, according to the recent agreement, had been guaranteed to Main Jawahar Singh.

Gulab Singh met the reproaches of the Darbar by pointing out the Jasrota incident as the last instance of its bad faith, but still showed his willingness to act upon his part of the agreement if no further offence was given him. But having no faith in his opponents, he also did not let up his efforts to embarrass the Darbar by diplomacy and otherwise with a view to securing delay in the outbreak of active hostilities with it.Even Mangala, Rani Jindan's slave girl, who had now become a power to be reckoned with in the Darbar, was won over by the payment of a handsome bribe, and she also tried to soften her mistress' attitude towards Gulab Singh. But a vigorous action against him was the demand of the other members of the Darbar, especially Jawahar Singh and Lal Singh[25]. They were heartened by the success which Rahimullah Khan's sons had achieved in the Poonch territory[26], and further desertions in Gulab Singh's camp.

Nihal Singh, the former Wazir of Suchet Singh, not only forsook the cause of Gulab Singh but also collected a force of the Samial Mians and some other refractories, and descended on Jammu from Samba via Uttar Behni. The last named place was attacked from the side of Basohli also. Another section of the Lahore army reached Ramgarh via Lala Chobara, while a third appeared from the direction of Manawar. As a result of these

24. In other sources he is called Faqir Ullah.
25. Broadfoot to Currie, 5 Feb. 1845, For. Sec. 4. Apl. 1845, No. 120.
26. For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 162.

reverses, trouble arose in Gujrat, Qadirabad, Dhanni, Pind Dadan Khan, and some other places too which were held by Gulab Singh in farm. At Naushehra were posted two platoons of Mian Jawahar Singh. They also now became perfidious.

Encouraged by these developments, the Governor of Kashmir was asked by the Darbar to move his forces in the direction of Kishtwar,[27] while a plan of operation against Jammu also from the side of the Panjab was adopted. Three Brigades commanded by Generals Mewa Singh Majithia, Lal Singh Marvree and Sant Singh, in all 12,000 men with guns, accordingly, marched towards Gulab Singh's seat of government to "effect what was considered (to be) an easy conquest."

Meanwhile, the troops of Sham Singh, after occupying Jasrota, systematically plundered the surrounding areas, and set ablaze about twelve villages. Worst of all, they seized about 800 women[28] of every rank, and carried them away to their own homes. Giving a report of these atrocities to the Darbar, Sham Singh himself wrote that these

> had been committed against a population. which had joined the Sikhs heartily against Gulab Singh, that the results would be in his opinion fatal, and that he looked on success against Jammu as now impossible, and the return of all the hill troops to the service of the Raja as nearly certain.

But the Darbar brushed this warning aside, and ordered its forces to march on. To hit Gulab Singh further, the estates of Suchet Singh, which had recently been confirmed in the name of his widow, were now bestowed on some other persons.

Finding that an armed conflict with the Lahore Darbar was now imminent, Gulab Singh redoubled his preparations. He exhorted his family members to compose their mutual differences in this hour of crisis. Suchet Singh's widow[29] was prevailed upon

27. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 260-65.
28. 1,000 women and boys, according to Hardinge (Hardinge to Ellenborough, 20 Feb. 1845—Hasrat, Bikramjit, *Papers*, p. 83).
29. She had become a "bitter enemy" of Gulab Singh after he had patched up his quarrel with Hira Singh over the family property, without giving her any share in it. (Broadfoot to Currie, 22 Jan. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 110).

to apply to the Darbar for the restoration of her estates. For all the miseries the people of Jasrota had suffered, Gulab Singh held himself responsible, but he told them that the Lahore authorities had let him down, whom he would never again trust. In the name of the Rajput race and his country, he also appealed them now to stand up as one man against the enemy. The current year was declared as a "season of war", and the revenue was remitted. To buck up the soldiers further, their pay was raised to the level of the Lahore army. There were a number of Sikh soldiers in his army. They were now honourably relieved, and asked to go back to the Panjab with which all ties were snapped off.

Insurrection of Rahimullah Khan in the Poonch territories was becoming formidable. A force was at once despatched in that direction also.

The news of all these measures were deliberately flashed across the borders of Jammu in order to strike awe in the minds of the enemies. Rahimullah Khan was indeed so much scared that he daily urged the Lahore Darbar to save his sons from the wrath of Gulab Singh. The Barkzai chiefs also at Lahore and Kabul began sending their families to a safer place. With these chiefs and many others who were opposed to the Darbar, Gulab Singh, in fact, entered into a secret correspondence,[30] and the revolts in the territories from Attock to Rohtas, Hazara, Wazirabad and Derajat were attributed to the intrigues of his agents.[31]

The magnum opus of this diplomat was, however, the move to sow dissensions in the Lahore Darbar and its army itself. To the chiefs, the officers and the men it was represented that after the notorious bad faith shown recently by Rani Jindan and her brother, the Raja could not hand them out the whole of Hira Singh's treasure immediately ; however, pending negotiations with them for proper security, he was willing to distribute, during the coming six months, a sum of rupees fifty lakhs among the army ; but if he was attacked, he would dole out his huge wealth to his own countrymen, and himself fight to the last, with the result that

30. Broadfoot to Currie, 5 Feb. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 120.
31. Ibid., 16 Jan. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 102.

even if he was defeated, the victorious army would be left with nothing to harvest in the end.

Immediately the advancing army came to a halt. The officers shrank from going among the men, some of them feigning illness, while others on the avowed ground of it, for the latter wanted then and there the distribution of gold necklaces which had been promised them before their start. And when this was done, they demanded an honourable treatment for Gulab Singh who was now proclaimed as "an old and faithful servant of the State." Some of them also pressed for the appointment of a Commander-in-Chief, while others desired to be led by the Darbar.

At the Darbar itself, all was "perplexity, dissension and alarm drowned in debauchery" indulged in by the Rani. She wished her brother to lead the army, leaving Lal Singh, her lover, with her; but Jawahar Singh declared that he would stay at Lahore and ordered Lal Singh to go to Jammu.[32] Both the chiefs were about to come to blows when, on the intervention of some, Lal Singh yielded, and agreed to command the army but on the condition that he would be laced with full authority to conduct the war or make peace, and further that nearly all the troops and all the leading chiefs would tag along with him.

The breach healed, Jawhar Singh and Lal Singh again became friends, and the latter left Lahore on February 8, when the Rani wept bitterly.[33]

With about 35,000[34] of the regular troops of the Darbar also now marching against Jammu, the threat to its safety mounted many fold. In desperation, Gulab Singh turned to the British. The latter were widely believed to be entertaining hostile designs against the kingdom of the Panjab. The Raja of Jammu, therefore, made frantic efforts to form an alliance with them. But the British spurned his offers.[35] This made him more nervous, but soon he pulled himself together, and determined to face the challenge alone

32. Ibid., 5 Feb. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 120.
33. Ibid., 11 Feb. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 129.
34. Hardinge to Ellenborough, 8 March 1845—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, p. 84.
35. For details, see the next chapter.

and boldly. And to his good luck, the army of invasion was neither disciplined nor united. In the words of Sohan Lal Suri,

> On their way they plundered and looted every *Thakurdwara*, *Dharamsala* and *Takia* of Mussalmans that came in their way and in addition to that went into the house of every *Zamindar* and villager and seized all the belongings in the houses and committed adulteries and other such bad deeds with respect to the ladies. On hearing the news of the arrival of those mischievous evil-doers people hid themselves in corners and secured escape and salvation for a few days. Wherever they went to spend their night they laid waste that place with the result that most of the villages and towns beacame ruined on account of the passage of these bad people and men and women among them took to flight and the condition of the protected country of the Maharaja became so devastated and disgusting that it could not be so even if it were overrun by an enemy.[36]

Reaching within about sixteen kilometres of Jammu,[37] Lal Singh sent Fateh Singh Mann and some other chiefs to secure the submission of Gulab Singh through talks, if possible. The Raja welcomed the emissaries with due respect, and entertained them for several days "with the alternate professions of submission and hints of defiance."[38]

Meanwhile, the troops also opened separate and independent negotiations with Gulab Singh, and asked the chiefs not to cross their path.[39] After the first round, they decided to send a deputation of their Panchas, numbering several hundred,[40] for further talks. To these Panchas, Gulab Singh accorded a treatment which befitted the masters of the State. He placed his sword and shield at their feet, and stood before them with folded hands as a suppliant. He then

36. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., IV, pp. 313-14.
37. G.C. Smyth (p. 134) gives the name of the place where the army halted as Babliana.
38. Broadfoot to Currie, 23 Feb. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 147.
39. Hardinge to Ellenborough, 8 March 1845—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, p. 84.
40. One hundred and fifty, according to Hardinge (Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, p. 84), and five hundred, according to S.S. Bal, *When Raja Gulab Singh's Fate Hung in the Balance*, in Punjab History Conference Proceedings, Apl. 26-27, 1975, p. 107).

made a gracious acknowledgement of the benefits he and his family had received from the Khalsa, but also contrasted the prosperity of the Lahore kingdom when his family were employed with the misgovernment of the present rulers. The Panchas accepted that although some of his relations had lost their lives owing to their mutual quarrels, Hira Singh and others had fallen through the treachery and wickedness of those who were now at the helm of affairs. When the question of Dhian Singh and Hira Singh's treasure was raised, Gulab Singh told the Panchas that a large part of it was still lying at Jasrota, and whatever little had come to Jammu he was prepared to hand them over without hesitation. Not only that ; he promised to give twenty-five lakhs of rupees to the army as a whole and gold ring and one hundred rupees to every soldier also as a donation on their return to Lahore.[41]

The Panchas applauded the talks with the Jammu Raja, which went on for about a week ; and during this period the latter entertained the former with "abundance of food, sweatmeats, drink and women[42]", and distributed presents with so lavish a hand that he came to be known as the "*sone ki kukri*" or the golden hen.[43] Lest the guests should get the impression that he was conducting these talks from a position of weakness, he also posted all of the troops then available with him around the town of Jammu. In order, however, to avoid a quarrel between them and the men of the Lahore army, the former were kept at a distance from where they could be seen but not communicated with.

The conduct of Gulab Singh created so favourable an impression on the minds of the Panchas that they offered him the office of Wazir. He, however, recommended that it be conferred on Prince Peshora Singh. To the Prince, Gulab Singh had already rendered a pecuniary assistance of rupees five lakhs, and the former had begun to hold daily Darbar at Sialkot. When approached, he agreed to accept this office but on the condition that the army would first put to death Lal Singh, Sardar Jawahar Singh, his

41. According to G.C. Smyth (p. 136) and C.H. Payne (p. 161), Gulab Singh promised every soldier a gold bangle and twenty-five rupees and a fine of rupees thirty five lakhs to the Lahore Darbar.
42. Broadfoot to Currie, 23 Feb. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 147.
43. Payne, C.H, op. cit., pp. 160-161 ; Smyth, G.C, op. cit., p. 136.

brother Sardar Hira Singh, Mangla, the slave girl, and some others also. If that was done, Peshora Singh also promised large donations to the army and a raise in the pay of an infantryman to bring it to the level of rupees fifteen per month.

The Prince, it is said, might have demanded the head of Mahraja Dalip Singh also, but sometime ago the British Political Agent had formally warned the Darbar that if the latter were removed through violent means, the Government of India would not recognise his successor.

Lal Singh and the chiefs were sent into the wilderness at this turn of events. While they were required to carry on all their duties of arranging the supplies etc., their presence in the camp was otherwise scarcely noticed. Soon panic also gripped their minds, and, to secure their interests, everyone of them entered into a secret communication with Gulab Singh as well as Peshora Singh. Lal Singh was so much scared that, on February 22, he thought of seeking safety in flight to the British territory, and recommended this course to Rani Jindan also. But he found no support from her. Their own men might take their lives if they attempted to do that. She, therefore, counselled her lover to await his fate where he was. But Lal Singh still vacillated, and gathered together all of his valuables. Not much later, the Rani also lost her nerves, and might have acted upon the advice of Lal Singh but for the practical difficulties attending it and a strong desire to keep her son on the throne as long as possible.[44]

Soon, however, dissensions broke out in the army. Many men became jealous as well as suspicious of their Panchas who had brought only promises for them but presents for themselves from the Raja of Jammu. They also denounced Gulab Singh as a "treacherous" person, and wrote to the Maharaja that not even for a higher pay would they support either the former or Peshora Singh. But the Brigades of General Mewa Singh Majithia unanimously declared that Gulab Singh was "a loyal and injured man" and "the only fit" person to govern.[45]

44. Broadfoot to Currie, 23 Feb. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 147. Hardinge to Ellenborough, 8 March 1845—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers* pp. 84-85.
45. Broadfoot to Currie, 3 March 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 156.

Meanwhile Fateh Singh Mann and his companions also returned to their camp with a message from Gulab Singh that he was prepared to abide by the terms of the agreement of January provided the claims of money made upon him were properly scrutinized and the jagirs and farms of Dhian Singh transferred to him. As the claims had been worked out by Bachna, Hira Shah, and Ganpat Rai, the former Wazir, the keeper of the Toshkahana and the Munshi respectively of late Hira Singh, the Jammu Raja further desired that they should do the verification job in his presence. Lal Singh jumped at the opportunity, and sent the persons to him.[46]

After some discussion between the two sides on February[28], Gulab Singh paid rupees four lakhs as the first instalment towards the full discharge of his obligations.[47] But then took place an altercation between them, and Fateh Singh and Bachna told the Raja of Jammu that

> the troops of the state were under their orders and were waiting simply for entering into war and kindling the fires of fighting, and remarked that, if they gave permission and a hint from their tongues to them, they would at once engae themselves in destroying his foundation and would put him in the prison of failure and take him to Lahore. They added further that if they (the troops) were showing delay or postponment, it was on their account. They...boastfully said further that the time for the destruction of the Jamwals seemed to have drawn near.[48]

Gulab Singh, it is said, not only patiently put up with this provocative address but also showed full courtesy to those who had made it by accompanying them for some distance and then returning. Hardly had, however, the party gone about two kilometres away across the Tawi through a thick jungle whey then were waylaid

46. Ibid., 28 Feb. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 148.
47. Ibid., 3 March 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 156.
The amount of the first instalment is given as three lakhs by G.C. Smyth (p. 134), three and a half lakhs by J.D. Cunningham (p. 241) and five lakhs by Allen (p. 313). The last named scholar also says that the amount to be paid subsequently was rupees fifty lakhs.
48. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., IV, p. 314.

by some men. Fateh Singh and Bachna were killed, and the money was brought back to Jammu.[49]

According to Sohan Lal Suri, these murders were ordered by Gulab Singh,[50] and his views are shared by many other scholars also. At least Wazir Bachna's murder, these scholars say, was committed in cold blood as he knew the Jammu Raja's resources[51] and had a great hold over the people of Jasrota.[52] But Dewan Kirpa Ram, the biographer of Gulab Singh, says that he had no hand in these murders, and that the whole affair was the work of some Jasrota men who were enraged at the desertion of Bachna to the enemy. Gulab Singh's men, in fact, tried to save the lives of the assailed, but without success. The Raja himself was then standing at a spot opposite the Gumat Gate. When informed of this incident, he was aflicted with such a grief that it was said to be "deeper than that he suffered at the death of his brothers and sons."[53] To the Khalsa army, therefore, he protested when accused of treachery or connivance. Some men suspected to be involved in the crime were arrested also,[54] and the wounded sent back. But Baba Mian Singh, Sher Singh Attariwala and Rattan Chand Duggal were detained for further negotiations.[55]

A large body of the Lahore army was already hostile to Gulab Singh. The murder of their two chiefs led others also to make a common cause with them, and all clamoured for a vigorous action against the Raja. All the troops were, accordingly, ordered to close in upon Jammu, and soon Ramgarh, Devigarh, Uttar Behni, Manawar and Nandani fell into the hands of the irregulars. Gulab Singh's men put up a stiff resistance, but were over-numbered. A few of them showed more discretion than valour only to lose their heads at the hand of their master by way of examplary punishment.[56]

49. Smyth, G.C. op. cit., pp. 134-35.
50. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., IV, pp. 314-15.
51. Cunningham, J.D., op. cit., pp. 241-42; Hardinge to Ellenborough, 22 March 1845—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, pp. 85-86.
52. Broadfoot to Currie, 5 March 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 161; also Govt. of India Despatch to Secret Committee, 22 March 1845, No. 25.
53. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 266-69.
54. Smyth, G.C, op. cit., p. 135.
55. Broadfoot to Currie, 5 March 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 161.
56. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 269-71.

The town of Jammu also was invested by the regular army. It was defended on the side of Satwari by Dewans Hari Chand and Nihal Chand, and by Dewan Jawala Sahai on that of Talab Tillo. Their enemy first made a reconnaisance attempt, but it was frustrated. Both the sides then resorted to artillery firing, with little or no effect. The Lahore army next launched a general attack, and, after a hotly contested battle for eight hours, drove the Jammu forces across the right bank of the Tawi, and occupied the Tillo-ka-Talab as well as the outer jungle. This was followed by an orgy of loot and rapine. Many women, having lost their "caste", jumped into wells, while others saved their honour by throwing themselves upon the swords of their fathers or brothers.

Gulab Singh's men made the most of their enemy's distraction, and soon reoccupied a number of their positions. The next day, they even wrested two guns[57] from them, and migh have swept the board but for a gallant action of Sham Singh. He was riding an elephant. At the crucial stage, he dismounted, and, at the head of some picked followers, engaged the enemy in a hand-to-hand fighting. Soon the guns were recovered, and the hillmen pushed even beyond their original positions,[58] at a staggering loss of about 2,000 men in all, of course.[59]

By this time, Ranjoor Singh Majithia also had advanced from the eastern side, after inflicting a defeat on Wazir Ratnu, and taken up a position within about ten kilometres of the town of Jammu, while Mangal Singh was marching upon Akhnur, after capturing Manawar.[60]

The morale of the Lahore troops was, therefore, again lifted, but still not so high as to risk another encounter immediately. Some of the chiefs also, having received liberal donations from Gulab Singh, were opposed to any further fighting. The latter too now showed eagerness for talks. His terms for peace were, therefore, welcomed, debated by the Panchas, and ultimately accepted.

57. Five guns, according to Kirpa Ram (p. 271).
58. Broadfoot to Currie, 27 March 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845, No. 22.
59. Allen, op. cit., p. 314.
60. Broadfoot to Currie, 27 March 1845, For. Sec. 20 June, 1845, No. 22.

These envisaged that Gulab Singh was to retain all of his possessions as well as those of Dhian Singh against some tribute, but the possessions of Hira Singh and half of those of Suchet Singh were to lapse to the Darbar. He was further required to pay the arrears of his revenue for the last three years, and these, along with the tribute, were reckoned at thirty-five lakhs of rupees, which amount had to be liquidated in regular monthly instalments of rupees five lakhs each, with further stipulation that the first instalment would be paid at once. Lastly, Gulab Singh agreed to pay a visit to the Lahore chiefs before they and the army returned to their capital.

The news of the successes of their army had heartened Rani Jindan and Sardar Jawahar Singh. But when they learnt of the cessation of hostilities and the army's intention to return, they were highly dismayed and disappointed. They had hoped to achieve, through the Jammu expedition, the twin objects of keeping the unmanagable army away from the capital for a pretty long time and forcing Gulab Singh to part with a substantial part of his hoarded treasure. But the army was now returning after only about a month's time and with a paltry sum. Unable to reconcile with such an end, Jawahar Singh sent Baba Rattan Singh to urge Lal Singh to abrogate the treaty with Gulab Singh, seize and send to Lahore the prisoners of war, and fall upon Jammu without delay.

Lal Singh, however, placed the whole matter before the Panchas who, after a stormy meeting, told the Baba to go back, and tell the Sardar that he was unfit to govern and would be soon thrown out of his office, whereafter he might conquer Jammu for himself. To demonstrate further that they were not going to be dictated by him, they sent the prisoners back to their camp.

The reply from Jammu made Jawahar Singh's blood creep. He denounced Lal Singh as an enemy, and declared that anyone who would bring him the latter's head would be well rewarded. But as previously decided, the Lahore army took to its return march on March 15. Gulab Singh also met the chiefs at Talab Tillo, with his folded hands, as a suppliant, and a sheet of cloth around his neck. Announcing that in the past he had committed some

offences, now he felt sorry for these, and offered to kiss the rod also. But the chiefs proclaimed that he had done no wrong, and exchanged presents with him. They also declared that as the office of the Panjab Wazir had earlier rested with the Jammu family, sooner or later it should be passed on to them again. Gulab Singh, however, said that in view of the tragic end of a number of his relatives, he had no wish to fill that office. And with this terminated his meeting with the Lahore chiefs.

Everything now seemed settled, and the danger to Jammu blown over. But just then there was another bolt from the blue, and the situation once again became as fluid as ever. By the time the above mentioned meeting was over, the troops had covered some distance. Then they stopped, and, surprisingly declared that they would not march a step further unless they were satisfied that Jawahar Singh also had accepted the recently concluded treaty with Gulab Singh. This attitude of the troops "produced as much perplexity and alarm among the Sirdars at Jammu as the treaty itself had done at Lahore."[61]

In order to extricate himself from the latest predicament, Lal Singh proposed to Gulab Singh that if he handed over Mian Jawahar Singh to him, he would prevail upon the reluctant troops to resume their march to Lahore. The Jammu Raja agreed but only after he was assured on oaths that his nephew would be accorded a good treatment. No sooner, however, had he stepped into the Sikh camp than was the Mian put under restraint. Dewan Jawala Sahai was, thereupon, immediately sent to remonstrate with Lal Singh. But Bakshi Bhagat Ram frustrated all the attempts of the former to secure the release of the Mian. He incited the troops by reminding them that they had been sent to conquer the Bahu fort and put Mian Raghubir Dev on the throne of Jammu, but so far they had achieved neither of these objectives.[62]

Raghubir Dev was one of the two sons of Raja Ajit Singh of Jammu—the other being Devi Singh. Since the grant of the Jammu Raj to Gulab Singh, both of them had been living at Thanesar.

61. Broadfoot to Currie, 18 March 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845, No. 22,
62. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 274.

But after the commencement of hostilities against Gulab Singh, Rani Jindan and Sardar Jawahar Singh had invited them to Lahore so that they could be used against the former, and the British authorities had permitted them to leave their territory.[63]

The bull had now to be taken by the horns, and Gulab Singh prepared even to stake his life. Entrusting Dewan Hari Chand with the government of his Raj and enjoining upon him not to surrender "without turning the soil of Jammu red by sacrificing the blood of heroes" if he (the Raja) was arrested or killed, he got his tents pitched amidst his enemies themselves, and, on March 16, moved into these with only about two hundred attendants.

With Gulab Singh himself now virtually a prisoner in their hands, the Lahore troops allowed Mian Jawahar Singh to return to Jammu. But soon after, the Raja was joined by Generals Mewa Singh Majithia and Sant Singh, who were favourably disposed towards him, and also the Panchas of their Brigades. The next day, he and his attendants were escorted by them all to their camps where Gulab Singh gave rupees five to each man and rupees 25,000, besides a horse with gold saddle, to Mewa Singh.[64] With this the two Brigades became further inclined towards the Raja. In the words of Sohan Lal Suri, they

> became partners of the respectable Raja for all the days of good and evil. They entered into strong agreement with Raja ji with the words, "we are willing to remain obedient and subservient and loyal to you, quite willingly and voluntarily : we would never deviate or show any kind of delay in showing respect to you and taking pride in you. We will afford protection and guard on behalf of all the *Singhs* of the *Panth*, for we would not allow anyone of the glorious Sirdars to show any kind of audacity and courage against you."[65]

The Brigades further proclaimed that it was "the will of the army that the Raja should proceed to Lahore and assume the Regency."

63. Broadfoot to Currie, 5 March 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 161.
64. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 275-76.
65. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., p. 316.

Soon the other officers also of the army as well as the chiefs vied with one another in professing their devotion to Gulab Singh.[66] To quote Sohan Lal Suri again, when the Raja went to the camp of General Mewa Singh, Lal Singh and other chieftains "set up quarrel and enmity on account of his not going to their camp."[67] Offers of service arrived from many at Lahore also where the news of the bold move of Gulab Singh had

> caused terror, suspending even the drunkenness and buffonery of the Holi, which Sardar Jawahar Singh had carried to an excess unknown before, and offensive to the respectable part of the court. Sardar Jawahar Singh prepared by turns for resistance and flight, and ended by throwing himself repeatedly on the mercy of the troops (at the capital) who told him to fear nothing especially if he would leave off being always drunk, and attend to the management of the State, which was in such confusion that the troops were not now paid with punctuality shown by Hira Singh and Pandit Jallah.

But the scales were again turned when, not much later, the men at Lahore were able to lift up their heads, and, through the Panches there, influenced those near Jammu. Lal Singh and the other chiefs also recovered from their surprise, and, "after innumerable intrigues, conferences and negotiations with contradictory and even changing results," the return march was suspended, and the prosecution of war was again talked of. Even the life of Gulab Singh was threatened, and the Brigades of Mewa Singh and Sant Singh were warned that if Gulab Singh escaped from their custody, they would be responsible for the payment of ten crores of rupees.

But Gulab Singh also did not sit idle. With his usual skill, he made urgent appeals to the good faith of the army. His trusted friends, Sultan Muhammad Khan Barkzai, General Mewa Singh and Chhattar Singh Attariwala went among the troops, contrasting the disorder of the present rulers with the vigour and success under the management of his brother and nephew. They also pointed out

66. Broadfoot to Currie, 28 March 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845, No. 33.
67. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., p. 316.

the danger arising out of the assemblage of a large British force on the Sutlej frontier, and said that only by placing Gulab Singh in power could the kingdom of Lahore be saved.

The agents of the Darbar tried to counteract this propaganda by telling the troops that Gulab Singh himself was in league with the British, and, therefore, deserved a severe dusting. But the Raja's money relegated every argument to the background. He had given the army five lakhs of rupees before his arrival in the Sikh camp, another five lakhs he splashed about after his arrival, and ten lakhs more were in the process of payment. He wished to pay them still more, he told them, but he could not do so immediately as his treasure lay far away from him, in the higher hills which were reached with difficulty.[68] A promise to raise their pay from 12 to 15 rupees per month was also made.[69]

The result of all these intrigues and counter-intrigues was that after every few hours a different report was flashed from the army camp to the capital—one said that Gulab Singh would be brought there to be raised to Wazirship ; another declared him an offender and proposed to confiscate all of his property, or imprison him for life, or give him a small jagir ; while a third one said that he would be given up as a prisoner to Rani Jindan and her brother.[70]

But between the Rani and Jawahar Singh themselves the feelings of amity had by now cooled down. She had rather come to nourish a great resentment against him for having separated Lal Singh from her ; and was, therefore, inclined even to turn against him provided his life was spared. Mangala, who had long been in the pay of Gulab Singh, also supported her against Jawahar Singh. Even the troops at the capital now began to think well of the Jammu Raja, although outwardly they still pretended to be with the Sardar and daily received presents from him.[71]

Fearful for his life, Sardar Jawahar Singh urged the army near Jammu to stay there and send Gulab Singh to the capital, attended

68. Broadfoot to Currie, 28 Mar. 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845, No. 33.
69 Ibid, I Apl. 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845, No. 49.
70. Ibid , 28 Mar. 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845, No. 33.
71. Ibid., 1 Apl. 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845, No. 49.

by a few men only. But on March 26, he was informed that the whole army would accompany the Raja and that, on reaching Lahore, his case would be decided in a joint meeting of the Maharaja, the Rani and two Panchas from each company of the army and none else.

The fate of Gulab Singh thus hung in the balance. But why had he ventured to place himself in the hands of his enemies? According to G. Broadfoot, the Agent to the Governor-General, North-West Frontier :

> the weakness of his position.. ...left him scarcely any other choice. A battle might have given him an honourable death, which he is not of a temper to prefer to any humiliation not interfering with caste, and giving hope however small of eventual success. Victory in the lower hills he could hardly hope for with his ill armed, hastily levied, and ill affected levies, but if he retired to the higher hills, the people of the lower valleys would rise against him to a man......There seemed no choice, therefore, but to secure while he yet had the means a portion of the Sikh army, and to enter as a competitor into the intrigues of the chiefs at the capital for power, and though he may at any time be assassinated, yet has as good chances of success as any of his rivals.[72]

The Government of India also informed the Secret Committee on April 22 that Gulab Singh played this extraordinary game

> evidently in the belief that the influence of his intrigues, lavish payments and more lavish promises, would induce the whole army and most of the influential chiefs and parties at the capital to declare in his favour and thus not only save him from destruction which he doubtless found he could not avert at Jammu but place him at the head of the administration of the Lahore State.[73]

In the company of the Lahore army, therefore, Gulab Singh pushed on towards the capital. But during the march, the ever shifting situation took yet another significant turn. Lal Singh was drawn so close to the Raja of Jammu that they exchanged swords with each other, and all the regular troops commanded by the former entered into a written agreement with the latter, according to

72. Broadfoot to Currie, 28 March 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845, No. 33.
73. Govt. of India Despatch to Secret Committee of Apl. 22, 1845, No. 33.

which, first, Gulab Singh was to be made the Wazir under Dalip Singh and Rani Jindan ; secondly, he was to enjoy absolute civil powers for eight years, without any interference from any quarter, even from the army ; and, thirdly, he was to pay the stipulated pay to the army regularly during this period, drawing on his own resources, if need be.[74]

At Lahore also, the atmosphere became decidedly more favourable for Gulab Singh owing to the exertions of Bhai Ram Singh. The Bhai, along with Faqir Aziz-ud-Din and "most of the more enlightened men in the Panjab" apprehended that Jawahar Singh would be the ruin of the State. They further believed that if anybody could preserve it, it was Gulab Singh. Hence, Bhai Ram Singh convened a meeting of the Panchas at the capital, on March 26, pointed out the dangers to which the State was then exposed, and urged them to commit it to the care of the Jammu Raja who alone, he said, could save it and also pay the army even if no revenue came to the government treasury for two years.

Ram Singh's arguments got into the heads of the Panchas, with the result that at once they took solemn oaths of fidelity to Gulab Singh, and also promised to send a deputation to support his friends in the army.[75]

But nothing was so certain as the uncertain behaviour of the avaricious troops. In the course of their march in practically two divisions, one of which was ahead and being led virtually by Gulab Singh, while the other was following under Lal Singh, the latter chief noticed that the upholders of the cause of his brother-in-arms were again wavering in their loyalty to him. He, therefore, asked the Brigades of Mewa Singh and Sant Singh to march in the rear and by short stages, so that if his supporters chose to take Gulab Singh back to Jammu, they could do it easily. But no sooner had Lal Singh arrived within about eight kilometres of Lahore and beyond the reach of the bulk of the army than his own adherence also to him began to crumble.[76]

74. Broadfoot to Currie, 30 March 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845, No. 53.
75. Ibid., 28 Mar. 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845, No. 47.
76. Ibid., 4 Apl. 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845, No. 54.

At this stage, the irregular cavalry also tried to bargain with Gulab Singh ; and when the latter acceded to their terms, they again turned to Jawahar Singh, and reassured him of their support but only on the terms accepted by the Jammu Raja. Ultimately, however, they opted for Gulab Singh, while the Brigades already supporting him now decided to give him up to the Darbar.

Bewildered, Gulab Singh sent to Dewan Dina Nath, Faqir Aziz-ud-Din, General Mehtab Singh, Bhai Ram Singh and several other chiefs earnest petitions, couched in the most abject language, saying that he had absolutely no desire to become the Wazir, but only longed to return to Jammu ; and that if they helped him, he would pay each one of them rupees two lakhs in cash from his pocket and also try his utmost for the grant of a jagir worth one lakh of rupees by the Darbar. The result was that

> The avarice of the courtiers could not withstand this immediate bait, and each put off any vigorous action either in the way of force against the two Brigades or of conciliation towards the cavalry in order first to settle his own private negotiations.

Efforts to further engratiate his new supporters, i.e., the irregular cavalry, were also simultaneously made by Gulab Singh. Certain terms had already been granted to them. In addition to these, he now promised them a gratuity of as many as eight months' pay. Soon this lured many others also to uphold his cause, and even the Brigades of Mewa Singh and Sant Singh again became inclined towards him.

At this stage, Gulab Singh made yet another dexterous move. With a sheet of cloth around his neck, he appeared among the two Brigades, and begged them to let him know their final decision ; if they had made up their mind to hand him over to his enemies, he told them, he would prefer to commit suicide ; his life was not even a day's worth if it were not spent in promoting their welfare ; his wish was to pay them well for as long as fifteen years with the help of his accumulated wealth ; and if they were not interested in this wealth, he repeated, he would like to live no moie.

Sometime before, Gulab Singh had also told them that he could easily raise at Lahore as much as three crores of rupees. Where was this amount, and how could he pay them at rupees fifteen per month, they now asked him.

There would be no difficulty, replied the Raja, if his plan was acted upon. Many chiefs of the Lahore Darbar had notpaid their revenues since long, and if they paid now, the total would exceed even three crores. He then mentioned the names of the sons of Dewan Sawan Mall, Faqirs Aziz-ud-Din and Nur-ud-Din, Bhai Ram Singh, Lal Singh, Dewans Ajodhya Parshad and Dina Nath, Sheikhs Mohi-ud-Din and Imam-ud-Din, Tej Singh and son of Khushal Singh, Sham Singh Attariwala, Mangal Singh, Bela Singh Mujal, Dewan Kurta Ram, and some others, and also the amount each one of them was required to contribute.[77] If given authority, he assured them, he himself would realise this amount, and those who still held tight would be handed over to the army to be given their medicine. As he himself was prepared to surrender the whole of his treasure, no one should grudge the parting of what was justly due from him.

It required little persuasion to recommend such a scheme of government, and when a deputation from Lahore arrived to take charge of Gulab Singh, the Brigades of Mewa Singh and Sant Singh told it that he

> would be given up as promised, if all chiefs of the opposite party were given up to the two Brigades and not otherwise; they were told further that the Brigades would agree to a partition of the Panjab, the Ravi being the boundary; all east of it with Lahore going to Dalip Singh, and all west of it to Gulab Singh with Shahdara; or if they decided the question by arms, they were ready to set up Peshora Singh against Dalip Singh at a competition for the whole kingdom.

No sooner was this reply brought to the capital than panic gripped the mind of everybody. The chiefs named by Gulab Singh "shrank from the terror of being denounced as rich debtors to the army, and refused to attend the Darbar." Dewan Dina

77. Those of the chiefs who were well disposed towards Gulab Singh were required to contribute much less as compared to the others.

Nath came for a while, but feigned sudden illness and left. Faqir Nur-ud-Din and others did not put up their appearance at all on the same pretext. Rani Jindan became anxious for a compromise to keep her son on the throne, while the regular army began discussing the scheme of government as proposed by Gulab Singh, and declared that "in opposing him they were opposing their own interests." Forsaken by everybody, Sardar Jawahar Singh knew not what to do—to take flight or trust for safety to his sister and nephew.[78]

Working up the troops further, Gulab Singh told them that the chiefs were collecting their wealth and preparing to run away from the Panjab. But the troops declared that they would pursue them wherever they went.

The Raja of Jammu also proclaimed that he had no wish to occupy the office of the Wazir, but was prepared to serve as a Naib or Deputy if the Khalsa assumed the Wazarat.[79]

Meanwhile, the chiefs at Lahore were able to pull themselves together, and ordered about 20,000[80] troops to attack Gulab Singh.[81] After many lurements and counterlurements from both the sides, on April 7 some of the Brigades did ultimately march out of the city.

Bhai Ram Singh then intended to call on the British for a subsidiary force and a Resident, giving the Cis-Sutlej territory and something else also in return, while Gulab Singh tried to avoid an immediate clash with his opponents. Having now reached near the Ravi, the latter asked his supporters[82] to retire beyond the cannon shot, and also urged Generals Mewa Singh and Sant Singh to encourage desertions in Jawahar Singh's camp by offering his troops the pay of rupees twenty per month.

78. Broadfoot to Currie, 5 Apl. 1845, For. Sec. 20 June, 1845, No. 55.
79. Ibid., 7 Apl. 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845, No. 56.
80. Smyth, G.C, op. cit., p. 138.
81. This was done, according to Sohan Lal Suri (p. 316), on a hint from Lal Singh.
82. Smyth, G.C, op. cit., p. 138.

The Generals, accordingly, went to the opposite side. They had a meeting with Jawahar Singh also. But the latter branded them traitors, got Mewa Singh beaten with slippers and cast both of them into the prison.[83] The tempers of the supporters of the Generals and Gulab Singh, consequently, rose very high, and they prepared to fight to the bitter end. But Bhai Ram Singh and some other chiefs came forward to mediate at this stage. They pointed out the impropriety of the troops owing allegiance to the same sovereign entering into a war as opponents; and said that if it were not avoided, it would be the death of all to the advantage of the British[84].

The Panchas of the army on both the sides, thereupon, agreed to settle the matter by negotiations, and ultimately decided that under a guarantee of personal safety by the whole of the army, Gulab Singh should go to Lahore, and have an interview with Rani Jindan. They further resolved that Jawahar Singh should not be present on that occasion.

The preliminaries having thus been settled, about two thousand of the Panchas assembled, proclaimed that the whole of the army was bound to protect the Jammu Raja from all indignities, and warned the chiefs that any mischief by them would be revenged fourfold. Gulab Singh was then led across the Ravi where he was welcomed by the whole army with thundering cheers,[85] and seated on an elephant "with a covered face in great pomp and glory."[86] In that condition, he was finally conveyed to the city, "half a prisoner," in the words of J.D. Cunningham, "and yet not without a reasonable prospect of becoming the minister of the country."[87]

The house where Gulab Singh was lodged was first guarded by the men from the Brigades of Mewa Singh and Sant Singh.

83. Broadfoot to Currie, 8 Apl 1845, For. Sec. 26 June 1845, No. 57.
84. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., pp. 316-17.
According to Broadfoot, however, the supporters of Gulab Singh were struck with terror when Jawahar Singh arrested the two Generals, and agreed to surrender him by the evening of April 7. (Broadfoot to Curie, 8 Apl. 1845, For. Sec. 26 June 1845, No. 57).
85. Smyth, G.C., op. cit., pp. 138-39.
86. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., p. 317.
87. Cunningham, J.D, op. cit., p. 242.

But on the night of April 8, Jawahar Singh and his supporters managed to get them replaced by their own men from the Ventura's Brigade, and ordered them to keep a constant vigil over their charge to prevent his escape or bid to commit suicide.

Gulab Singh thus actually became a prisoner in Lahore, and so great was the joy of his enemies at this occasion that salutes were fired, and presents distributed. An invasion of the British territory also was then talked of.

But not very long after there revived the old rivalry between Sardar Jawahar Singh and Lal Singh, and the latter began to woo the army preparatory to a struggle for power with the former. Generals Mewa Singh and Sant Singh also were got released through his intercession.[88] The two chiefs then became fearful for each other's life also, and began to attend the Darbar fully armed and in the company of armed retainers. Both of them, in fact, began to hold practically separate Darbars.

In the case of Gulab Singh, however, with one accord they ordered him one day to present himself before them. But the former replied that as he was the prisoner of the army, he would oblige them only if the army Panchas granted him leave. And the Panchas reprimanded the Darbar sharply for having served an order on the Raja of Jammu without their permission. They further made it known that he was "the chief person in the state," and would be introduced to the Maharaja and the Rani as and when deemed proper.[89]

It is said that soon after Gulab Singh's arrival at Lahore, Rani Jindan had sent him a special messenger with solemn assurances of her good wishes and a guarantee of safety.[90] When, therefore, the Panchas conducted him to her presence on April 12, she accorded him a very warm reception. Jawahar Singh and Lal Singh also were later ordered to do him proper honour.

Gulab Singh presented on this occasion rupees four lakhs in cash, four elephants, four horses, twenty-five camels, four bangles and twenty-one gold ducats in addition to rupees two thousand

88. Broadfoot to Currie, 9 Apl. 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845, No. 51.
89. Ibid., 5 May 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845, No. 58.
90. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., p. 317.

and one hundred by way of *Sarwarna*. Lal Singh pointed out that the Raja had paid rupees ten lakhs before also. In all, therefore, the latter paid rupees fourteen lakhs in cash. The Rani then said that being "a chosen one of the wisest men of the world," he should dismiss from his mind all that had happened in the past, and now perform the duties of the Wazir, which office was still vacant. Assuring him of her full support and protection, she further told him that all restrictions upon him were withdrawn.[91]

The Rani's attitude brought much relief to Gulab Singh. But the office of the Wazir he did not want to accept in view of the wild aspirations and expectations of both the army and the chiefs. Hence, this offer he politely declined.

A little later, when the rivalry between Jawahar Singh and Lal Singh became more acute, the latter entered into a definite understanding with Gulab Singh. The Rani also supported him in this course, with the result that the three concluded a secret pact for the settlement of their affairs. Outwardly, however, they conducted themselves in such a manner that the agreement which soon followed between the Darbar and Gulab Singh appeared to have been made under the dictation of the troops.

According to the agreement,[92] which was reached on April 24, the total amount Gulab Singh had to pay to the Darbar was reckoned at rupees sixty-eight lakhs. This included a fine of rupees eleven lakhs imposed upon him for the murder of Fateh Singh Mann and the others along with him. But the Raja was then authorised to deduct from the total amount what he had already paid, and an allowance for the losses suffered by him was also made. He was thus entitled to count as part of his payment rupees four lakhs which he said the widow of Suchet Singh would pay and nineteen lakhs which she would receive from the British on account of her husband's treasure at Ferozepur.

In the ultimate settlement of accounts, it was found that Gulab Singh had to pay to the Darbar only rupees twenty-seven lakhs—a sum which was far less than what he himself had at one time

91. Ibid, pp. 319-20.
92. Kirpa Ram (pp. 282-84), however, gives much credit for this agreement to one Rattan Singh.

offered to pay, "but no man dared to oppose openly what was called the act of the army, especially with Gulab Singh at liberty, and the leading personage at the Darbar."[93]

Accounts settled, all the possessions of Gulab Singh were restored to him without any change. The possessions of his late brothers and nephew, along with their wealth and property, were also allowed to be kept by him, and all the government officials were instructed to keep their hands off these.[94]

Thereafter, Gulab Singh stayed for about a half and three more months at the capital, but spent much of his time in the company of holy men, distributing gifts and alms among them, and performing religious ceremonies connected with the death of his relatives. When he visited the place where Dhian Singh was cremated, he was overcome by so much grief that he wept profusely and loudly as a child and the people around "were much moved to see such sorrow in a man so long looked up to and feared."

To the Darbar he went mostly when sent for,[95] and intervened in its affairs only with a view to settling them.[96] His remedy for the financial troubles was that the troops should give up their extravagant demands, and Jawahar Singh should effect economy in the government expenditure. But neither were the former prepared to come down nor did the latter have courage enough to stand up to the unpopularity which the proposed measure was bound to bring him. On his beam-ends, Jawahar Singh asked Gulab Singh to pay up the first instalment of the amount due from him. But the latter expressed his inability, saying he himself was dependent on the arrears of his estates and recovery of his property lately plundered by the Darbar officials in the territories farmed out to him.

The disaffection in the army, consequently, went on mounting. There was a lot of uneasiness among the commercial classes also. The disorderly conditions prevailing in the Panjab almost since

93. Broadfoot to Currie, 5 May 1845, For. sec. 20 June 1845, No. 58.
94. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., pp. 322-23.
95. Broadfoot to Currie, 5 May 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845, No. 58.
96. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., pp. 326-27.

the death of Ranjit Singh had told very heavily on the merchants, traders and bankers. Hence, they had been longing for peace and tranquility, and looking to Gulab Singh as "the only man capable of securing these objects ; the appearance of moderation now assumed by him still further attached this class of men (to him), and every day's prolongation of disorder" made "them more important to see him succeed the present incompetent rulers." The army and many others also came to believe that if given authority, he would cut even the Gordian knot.

But Rani Jindan was now hesitant to deprive her brother of the authority. Yet another problem with her was by whom to replace him—Lal Singh, her paramour, or Gulab Singh, well-known for his administrative ability. That the latter would prove dependable and work for the continuance of her son's rule also was beyond doubt.[97] But the situation was further complicated by the fact that while Jawahar Singh and Lal Singh cherished feelings of enmity towards each other, both were opposed to the elevation of Gulab Singh also to the Wazirship. Further, to keep the power in his hands, Jawahar Singh was not averse to pick up quarrel even with the British.[98]

Under these circumstances, Jawahar Singh continued to wield the nominal power, Lal Singh's intrigues against him also went on, and Gulab Singh supported the one or the other in accordance with his own interests, which generally coincided with those of

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It might to mentioned here that in the course of his conflict with Hira Singh Gulab Singh had sent a message to Rani that if she would support him, he would remove his nephew from the Court. (Supra. 155).

98 Broadfoot to Currie, 5 May 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845. No. 58 ; Ibid, 25 April, 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845, No. 66.

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98 Broadfoot to Currie, 5 May 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845. No. 58 ; Ibid, 25 April, 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845, No. 66.

Rani Jindan. On May 14, Jawahar Singh was formally also nominated as the Wazir, and Gulab Singh shared the joy of the occasion with him.

With Jawahar Singh, Gulab Singh 'sided in order to please him and his supporters, especially Sham Singh Attariwala, who had been offended by the haste with which the agreement of April 24 between the Darbar and himself had been concluded. It was again in keeping with this objective that he suggested Rani Jindan to seek bride for her son from the Attariwala family. Sham Singh naturally felt flattered. But as he himself had no daughter of his own, the choice fell on the one of Chhattar Singh, the turbaned brother of Gulab Singh. But Jawahar Singh was still not prepared to recognize the grant of Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh's estates to Gulab Singh. The Raja of Jammu then successfully induced him to confer Dhian Singh's territories on Chhattar Singh and his son in consideration of the proposed alliance, and "this was looked on as little else than a step to their transfer to Gulab Singh himself." But soon after the chiefs of Rajouri and Bhimbar rose in revolt on the instigation of Peshora Singh and expelled from those territories the officers of both the Darbar and Jammu. The Darbar was then left with no choice but to transfer them to Gulab Singh as it was felt that he and only he could control them.[99]

Thus was everything got back by Gulab Singh, with the exception, of course, of his farms.

The conditions at the capital, however, went from bad to worse. The army became more and more restive day by day, the chiefs were blind in their own cause, and the rivalry between Jawahar Singh and Lal Singh deepened. All were, therefore, wrapped up in the web of intrigues and counter-intrigues. A couple of attempts were made on the life of Gulab Singh also.[100] It was, therefore, now time for him to return to Jammu. Once or twice before also he had sought the Rani's permission to leave, but she

99. Ibid., 24 May 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845, No. 64; Ibid., 24 Apl. 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845, No. 66.
100. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., pp. 327-28; Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 285-87.

had not granted it. Now, however, she gave her clearance. On August 9, therefore, he set off on his homeward journey, and, "covering the long stages of march", soon reached Jammu safely.[101]

The period almost from the death of Hira Singh to the beginning of August 1845 thus proved to be one of great trials and tribulations in the life of Gulab Singh and highly crucial in the history of the Jammu Raj. Not only was Jammu invaded by a large force of the Lahore Darbar, but the life of its architect also remained under a constant threat for a pretty long time. By his diplomatic skill and cool headedness, however, Gulab Singh averted every crisis, and ultimately emerged almost unharmed.

101. Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., p. 328.

CHAPTER TEN

Gulab Singh's Overtures to the British

For historical as well as religious reasons, the kingdom of Ranjit Singh was not likely to pal up with Afghanistan, and this fact had encouraged the British to treat the Panjab as a buffer between their Sutlej boundary and the turbulent Afghans. But two more conditions were essential to make the State of Panjab a useful buffer for the British ; first, it should be strong enough to defend itself against the Afghans, and, secondly, it should put trust in and be on friendly terms with the British. So long as Ranjit Singh lived, his government fulfilled both of these conditions, and therefore, served the British interests well.[1]

But after the Maharaja's death, the situation began to alter. Nau Nihal Singh as well as Dhian Singh were imbued with anti-British feelings. The factional fighting among the chiefs of the Lahore Darbar and, most important of all, the rise of the army

1. Bal, S.S., *British Policy towards the Panjab*, 1971, pp. 57-58.

Panchas later gave a rude shock to the stability also of the State. The two conditions for the success of the buffer policy thus tended to die out, and the British policy towards the Panjab also showed signs of change. Thus, while during and for some time after Ranjit Singh's death the "guiding principle" of their policy had been "to see the unity of the Sikh nation and avoidance of all interference in the internal affairs and the maintenance of the alliance with the State,[2]" in the time of Sher Singh, as we have already noted, a British force was actually equipped to march on Lahore to help him bring the ungovernable Khalsa army under control.[3] There was, however, as yet no question of the British intervention to occupy the Panjab. In a letter of April 6, 1842, to Lord Fitzgerald, the President of the Board of Control, Duke of Wellington wrote :

> if we are to maintain our position in Afghanistan, we ought to have Peshawar, Khyber Pass, Jallalabad, and the passes between that part and Kabul. But I would prefer to have the Sikhs in possession of their Panjab. If we push to the west at all, it might be in the hills towards the sources of the rivers by which is Panjab watered and defended, that is to say, Kashmir. I have always entertained this opinion, but I would prefer to leave the Sikhs as they are, and if possible, to maintain peace.[4]

But continuance of the Sikh rule over the whole of the. Panjab was put in a quandary when Maharaja Sher Singh and Dhian Singh were assassinated. The British read in these events a tendency towards the break up of the Lahore kingdom into two parts—the plains under the Sikhs and the hills under Gulab Singh and Hira Singh. They themselves were, however, still determined to do nothing "to impair the independence" of their neighbours, although "the ultimate tendency" of these events, they believed, was "without any effort on our part, to bring the plains first, and at somewhat later period, the hills under our direct protection and control."[5]

2. Abstract of Instructions to Clerk from Secy. to Govt., 4 May 1840—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, p. 52.
3. Supra, 107.
4. Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, p. 60.
5. Ellenborough to Queen, 20 Oct. 1843 ; also Ellenborough to Wellington, 20 Oct. 1843—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, pp. 66-67

Subsequently, however, when the disorder in the Panjab further spread, both in extent and magnitude, the British authorities in India again prepared to resort to armed intervention to set its affairs right. Writing to the Queen Victoria on April 21, 1844, Lord Ellenborough, the Indian Governor-General, said :

> The example of successful mutiny in any army near our frontier is more perilous than would be its declared hostility. Lord Ellenborough cannot but feel that the termination of the present state of things in the Panjab is essential to the security of British power in India : but he will wait, cautiously preparing for a contest he would willingly defer, but which he considers inevitable.[6]

As a result of their intervention or otherwise, if the Panjab fell under the British control, what would happen to the hills ? According to Lord Ellenborough, these would probably "be very much divided under separate governments" and ultimately all of them would come under the British wings.[7] But Richmond held different opinion as regards Gulab Singh. Writing to Thompson, Secretary to the Government of India, on September 16, 1843, he said :

> Gulab Singh wishes to be independent, he will never seek any other than an equal alliance with us and he will never become tributary without struggle.[8]

Not long after, however, the Political Agent received *hints* from various sources that the Jammu Rajas were "not indisposed to come to terms with the British Government", and that many other chiefs also of the Lahore Darbar were "ready to lay their possessions at our feet.[9]"

With the conditions in the Panjab going from bad to worse, and in view of the British concern over these, the general opinion in the country was that sooner or later the Panjab would be overrun by the British forces. No wonder, the self-seeking chiefs

6. Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, p. 73.
7. Ellenborough to Wellington, 20 Oct. 1843—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, p. 67.
8. For. Sec. 23 March 1844, No. 487.
9. Richmond to Currie, 12 Dec. 1843, For. Sec. 23 March 1844, No. 537.

were trying to protect their interests by entering into negotiations with them before hand. But the Governor-General of India himself was not willing to go to war immediately. "I earnestly wish that we may not be obliged to cross the Sutlej in December next," wrote Ellenborough to Wellington on February 15,1844.[10] To the Queen also he wrote :

> It is hoped that the State of the Panjab may not render necessary in December next the operation beyond the Sutlej, but every preparation will be made with a view to enabling the army to undertake that operation whenever it may become necessary.[11]

The Board of Directors went a step further, and asked Lord Ellenborough "to avoid a policy of territorial extension towards Panjab despite lawlessness prevailing there."[12]

Under these circumstances, it was not considered "necessary" to take notice of the indirect hints from Gulab Singh. Nor was it considered "honourable" to entertain the overtures of a chief against the Darbar with whom the British were then on friendly terms.[13] But the future was uncertain. The situation was fast changing, and need might soon arise to close up with this man. The British authorities prepared to meet that eventuality also, and to be able to determine the nature of their new relationship, they decided to equip themselves with more information than they already had about him. They wanted to know, for instance, the number of his forts, the quality of his troops, the extent of his territories, and especially what branches of the deposed families of the former chiefs of these territories still existed, where they resided and how were they treated by the people. All this information, the Secretary to the Government of India now asked Richmond to collect.[14]

The Political Agent soon did the job, prepared his Memorandum on the Jammu Rajas, and submitted it to his Government. It spoke quite favourably of Gulab Singh. The

10. Hasrat, Bikramajit *Papers*, p. 70.
11. Ellenborough to Queen, 16 Feb. 1844—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, p. 71.
12. Satinder Singh, Bawa, op. cit., Ch. VI.
13. Richmond to Currie, 12 Dec. 1843, For. Sec. 23 Mar. 1844, No. 537.
14. Secretary to Richmond, 31 Jan. 1844, For. Sec. 23 March. 1844, No. 558.

Agent further mentioned that the Raja seemed desirous of an alliance with the British. But, he said at the same time,

> I am not without a belief that the Raja entertains hopes of profit to himself, should a contest chance to arise between us and the Sikhs. The Raja has I think the hope that he would be regarded as our ally in such a contest, and that he would afterwards be recognized as the independent sovereign of Peshawar and Kashmir and of the Hill States between the Indus and Sutlej.[15]

When, however, Suchet Singh was killed, and Pandit Jallah kindled differences between Hira Singh and Gulab Singh, the Jammu Raja's plans to reduce Peshawar, according to Richmond, received a setback, and then he set his heart upon the establishment of an independent State in the hills only. But how to achieve this objective also was a ticklish problem. The moment he tried to separate himself from the Panjab, the Lahore army was sure to march upon Jammu, and, in that event, Richmond believed, his hill population also would rise against him. Finally, he would be forced to confine himself to his forts, "and starved into self-destruction (for he would never yield) if he did not soon fall in action, or under the knife of an assassin."

Arguing thus, Richmond wrote to Currie that the desire of Gulab Singh was to be recognized as an independent sovereign by the British Government, for that measure would impart security to his position. Perhaps referring to the assurances given to the Raja during the recent Anglo-Afghan war, the Political Agent further stated that from time to time the British also had allowed Gulab Singh to entertain a hope that at the proper time his independence would not be "displeasing" to them.

But whenever the Agent had received a "cautious hint", through an indirect channel, of course, that the Raja was eager to come to terms with the British, he himself had either given no answer or his replies had been intentionally vague ; and for this attitude he had his own explanation to give. If the British formed an alliance with Gulab Singh, on the one hand it would give an

15. Richmond to Hugh, 3 Apl. 1844, For. Sec. 27 Apl. 1844, No. 175 ; See also Richmond to Currie, 29 Apl. 1844, For. Sec. 15 June 1844, No. 197.

umbrage to the Sikhs, and on the other it would bring no benefit to themselves. Richmond had now come to believe that with the occupation of the Panjab, the control of the hill States between the Sutlej and Kashmir also would automatically pass into their hands. Why, therefore, to have separate dealings with the Jammu Raja ?[16]

The Governor-General of India also was not inclined to oblige Gulab Singh. He informed the Agent that no promise of independence had ever been given to the Raja, and "if any such hope had been held out, it might have been without authority.[17]"

The British attitude towards the Panjab, however, witnessed another shift when Hira Singh was put to death. The Khalsa army put aside all bars of restraint, and frustrated all attempts at the establishment of a stable government. Revolts also broke out in the Muslim dominated territories of Kashmir, Multan and those lying between the Indus and the Afghan border. What was most serious, the combination of the Sikhs and the Dogras, the mainstay of the Panjab Government during and after Ranjit Singh's time, came to an end. These events convinced Henry Hardinge, who had replaced Ellenborough in July 1844, that the Lahore kingdom was heading towards dissolution. In Kashmir, Multan and the Trans-Indus, he believed, would emerge Muslim States which would be a threat both to the Upper Sindh and the Sutlej frontier.

Hardinge further visualised that the hills would form a separate State under Gulab Singh; and there was no prospect of the Lahore Darbar subduing him, nor of Gulab Singh supplanting the Darbar. But in their mutual struggle, the Lahore kingdom was likely to wither away to the advantage of the Muslims ; and in that case, "the entire fabric of the policy that the British had been pursuing so far would tumble down."[18]

16. Richmond to Currie, 3 June 1844, For Sec. 13 July 1844, No. 126.
17. Currie to Richmond, 15 June 1844, quoted by Satinder Singh, Bawa, op. cit., Ch. VI, f. n. 79.
18. Bal, S.S., op. cit., p. 62.

What should the British then do? Interfere in the Panjab, destroy the mutinous army, and establish order? That would amount to the introduction of a subsidiary system. But the Governor-General ruled out this solution on many grounds, financial as well as political, and, instead favoured to interfere in order to take over.[19] "I am convinced", he said, "that a true policy for India is to have a strong Sikh Government in the Panjab. If that cannot be expected, we cannot have Afghan or Mahommedan reoccupation. The Panjab must either be Sikh or British."[20] Henry Hardinge, accordingly, began to concentrate troops on the frontier.

Soon after, however, the very basis of his thesis began to melt away. The Lahore troops crushed the Muslim revolts, and, in the beginning of February 1845, marched against Gulab Singh also. Hardinge, therefore, held his hand back.

The Raja of Jammu, however, now for the first time made direct overtures to the British against his enemies. Driven into a corner, he tried to contact not only the Governor General of India but also the British authorities at home through Ventura, a former French General in the Lahore army. Ventura was at this time planning to leave for Europe. He was given, through his Munshi, Chet Ram, two letters from Gulab Singh. The first, a forwarding letter without date, was in the name of Browne, an Englishman in the Jammu Raja's service, and stated that the latter was "ready to do anything in this country (which) the English may desire." The second, dated January 10, 1845, was written in Persian, and addressed to Ventura, stating that Gulab Singh was prepared to render every service to the British. This letter Ventura was asked to show first to the Governor-General of India and subsequently to the President of the Board of Control in England, if not to the Prime Minister.[21]

There was, however, no response to these overtures, nor any was immediately expected. The British hoped that the Panjab

19. Hardinge to Broadfoot, II Sept. 1845—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, p. 91.
20. Hardinge to Ellenborough, 18 Aug. 1845—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, p. 90.
21. Bal, S.S., When Raja Gulab Singh's Fate Hung in the Balance, in *Panjab History Conference Proceedings*, 9th Session, 1975, pp. 103-04.

might have a stable government. But Gulab Singh's position, in the meantime, became critical, and his well-wishers at Lahore also made an attempt to rouse the British interest on his side. Thus, when the rumour of Mian Jawahar Singh's desertion to the Lahore troops at Jasrota reached the capital, Bhai Ram Singh met the British Vakil or representative at the Court, and asked him to inform the Political Agent that he was prepared to obtain and send him a written engagement from Gulab Singh, stipulating to cede to the British the possessions of the Darbar on the south side of the Sutlej, any other limited territory on the north of the river, and fifty lakhs of rupees in return for their assistance.[22] Nearly these very were the terms which the British had demanded in 1841 to help Sher Singh in suppressing the mutinous Khalsa army.

Gulab Singh himself also simultaneously sent an emissary to Maj. Broadfoot who had assumed the charge of the British Political Agency at Ludhiana in November 1844. The emissary, named Sadhu Ram,[23] first introduced himself through a letter,[24] and then straightway told Broadfoot that he had come to seek the British help for his master. He said that the fidelity of Gulab Singh and his family had been repaid by the Sikhs in the manner well known to all. The latter were now after the life of the Raja also who was, therefore, forced to fight in self-defence. He further said that his master had absolutely no wish to rule over the men who were bound by no gratitude of faith, nor were such men themselves capable of establishing a good and enduring government. Out of sheer necessity, therefore, ere long the British would have to occupy the Panjab. Arguing thus, Sadhu Ram referred to

22. Agent to Currie, 25 Jan. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 111.
23. He was the resident of a village located somewhere between Jammu and Lahore, and an active follower of the Udasi Sect. Widely travelled, he was a good scholar of Sanskrit, and possessed some knowledge of Tamil, Telegu and English also.
24. This letter was written in the hand of the same person who had written to Ventura, but was without signatures or seal, and addressed to the Major without mentioning his name. It said : "I have at this time deputed to you my confidential Agent Sadhoo Ram to wait upon you. I hope that you will attend to his representations. I trust that you will keep me constantly acquainted with all particulars where you are." (For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 116).

Gulab Singh's services to the British during their war against the Afghans, and told Broadfoot that the Raja of Jammu now also wished to offer them his services in return only for the confirmation of his possessions.

The Political Agent then wanted the Jammu emissary to authenticate what he had said. Though hesitatingly, the latter produced a paper on which were recorded some notes for his own guidance but which also bore Gulab Singh's signatures. This document clearly mentioned the following terms for Gulab Singh's alliance with the British :

1. Confirmation of the possessions of Gulab Singh and seven or eight dependent chiefs, including Chhattar Singh Attariwala;
2. Punishment to the murderers of his family; and
3. Gulab Singh's commitment to help the British in the occupation of the Panjab.

But Maj. Broadfoot even then refused to entertain this proposal. Sadhu Ram, thereupon, offered to secure his master's seal or any other authentication which would satisfy the Major. But the Political Agent maintained that he had no reply to give to "such papers."[25]

The Government of India also approved of their Agent's treatment towards Gulab Singh's confidential messenger as

> The reception of any proposals from parties hostile to the Maharaja (Dalip Singh) and his power, however just their grievances may be against the Lahore Government, would, if these overtures were not distinctly rejected, expose the British Government to imputations of secret connivance with such persons, the falsehood of which one should not only be able to deny, but is prepared at all times to demonstrate.

The Agent was, however, told to keep back from the Lahore Darbar the nature and details of such overtures as he had received from Gulab Singh unless, of course, the life of the Maharaja was threatened.[26]

25. Broadfoot to Currie, 4 Feb. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 115.
26. Currie to Broadfoot, 13 Feb. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 117.

Subsequently, the circumstances conspired to offer Gulab Singh yet another opportunity to approach the British for help in this hour of crisis. On January 17, 1845, an European, named M. St. Amand, entered the town of Jammu. When an official of Gulab Singh called on him to know what had brought him there, the latter explained that he was in search of a suitable employment. As Jammu was then under a threat of invasion, he also offered certain suggestions for its defence. The official, however, refused to take him at his words, and expressed the belief that he had probably been sent by the British on some confidential mission. But this was denied by Amand who said that he had absolutely no concern with the British.[27]

It was only a few days before that Madho Ram had left Jammu for Ludhiana with a proposal from Gulab Singh, and the latter was anxiously awaiting the outcome of the former's mission. The arrival of the whiteman at this juncture naturally aroused both curiosity and suspicion.

St. Amand, however, heard nothing from the side of Gulab Singh for the next two days. On the morning of 20th, he learnt that last night an emissary had arrived from Lahore with a huge financial demand, but that Gulab Singh had refused to comply with it, and war was now the only alternative.[28] Immediately he went to see the Raja in his palace. The latter received him warmly, and asked him to come out with the message of the British Political Agent. On this, Amand repeated what he had said earlier ; that he was an engineer and had come to Jammu of his own to be employed in that capacity. He also spoke of the propriety of fortifying the heights of Jammu and of the facility with which the Sikh camp could be surprised during the night. But not even one word of his talk pricked up Gulab Singh's ears. The whole attention of the latter was absorbed by the sole question—what was the reaction of the British to his proposal for alliance, and he repeated it ten times, assuring that "he had no other wish than to see the English masters not only of the whole Panjab but also of all India, that he

27. Amand to Mills, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 126.
28. This event perhaps refers to the mission of Lala Rattan Chand Dugal and Bawa Mian Singh. (Supra, 166).

would be honoured by being employed by them as a servant, that he would put Kashmir into their hands as well as Ladakh and Hazara." But Amand's answer was the same—that he had no links with the British. He also said that he was a Frenchman, and his deputation on any confidential mission by the British should not even be thought of. Gulab Singh, however, still refused to believe him, with the result that their fruitless talk went on for some more time. St. Amand then expressed his wish to depart. But Gulab Singh would not permit him to leave either, still hoping that some further persuasion might bring the visitor round. It was only after all of his efforts had ended in failure that he allowed Amand to go.

The next day, Amand was officially informed by Gulab Singh's men that the demand of the Lahore Darbar for money had been rejected and war accepted. Thereupon, the former again called upon the Raja, and told him that whatever he had deposed in the course of his earlier meeting was, indeed, a lie. The fact was that he had been deputed by the Ludhiana Agent for ascertaining the Raja's true feelings and intentions towards the British; and since it had to be done secretly, he was obliged to act in the way he had done, for which he was sorry.

Gulab Singh felt extremely happy. He assured the visitor of his absolute loyalty to the British, and hoped that his services would be accepted. He also told him that he had no ambition to rule over the Panjab, and he might have long ago seized Kashmir but for the fact that "he still considered himself bound to support a power founded by his father and protector Ranjit Singh, the possessions of whom he had by his own exertions more than anyone else contributed to extend, and because he was not a *Namak Haram*." His aching desire was only to spend the rest of his life in peace and to preserve for his sons and grandsons what Ranjit Singh had bestowed upon him as a price for his services. To the British arms he wished success not only in the Panjab but also in Kashmir as well as Tibet. But after they had occupied the Panjab, Gulab Singh wanted them to extend their protection to some other chiefs also who were his friends and as sincerely devoted to the British as he himself was.[29]

29. Amand to Mills, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 126.

St. Amand then expressed his full satisfaction over Gulab Singh's disposition, and wrote a letter to Capt. Mills, Assistant Political Agent, Ludhiana, saying that Gulab Singh was a sincere friend of the British and fully dependable. He further wrote that as the Sikhs had put a number of the Raja's close relatives to death, the Raja, with his forty or fifty thousand men, was prepared to fall upon the Panjab if and when it was invaded by the British. Dost Muhammad of Kabul, with whom Gulab Singh was already in correspondence, was also then likely to join the foray on their side. The deployment of the Lahore troops at various places too was mentioned by Amand in this letter.[30]

On his suggestion, Gulab Singh also penned down a letter to Capt. Mills. After referring to his family's services to both the Lahore Darbar and the British, he mentioned that Kharrak Singh and Nau Nihal Singh were the only legitimate descendants of Ranjit Singh, and that, after their death, the Sikhs had not only taken the life of many of his relations but also were now bent upon his own destruction. Under these circumstances, Gulab Singh said, he wished to obtain the British assistance in return for his faithful services to them.[31]

Both the letters were sent to Ludhiana through special bearers. But the bearers were dismissed without any reply[32] as the writer of the first and instigator of the second, St. Amand, was an impostor and not a British representative.[33] He was really a French adventurer who had come to Jammu of his own to serve Gulab Singh as an engineer. The circumstances, however, landed him in such a situation that he could easily exploit it to promote the British interests ; and this he decided to do in the hope of receiving some reward from them. But his conduct did not meet with the approval of the British in view of the policy they were then following towards the Panjab. Hardinge was, in fact, so much offended with him that he called him "a great scamp", and said that he "will have his nose cut or be hanged."[34]

30. Amand to Mills, 20 Jan. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 123.
31. Gulab Singh to Mills, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 128.
32. Broadfoot to Currie, 11 Feb. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 127.
33. Ibid, 6 Feb. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 122.
34. Hardinge to Ellenborough, 20 Feb. 1845—Hasrat, Bikramjit, *Papers*, p. 83.

Gulab Singh was thus duped by St. Amand. But the British authorities thought that the former was purposely conducting negotiations with them through an European with a view to making the Lahore Darbar and the people believe that he was already in alliance with them. Working under that delusion, they decided to apprise the Darbar with the facts of the case before it charged them of treachery. The Maharaja was, accordingly, informed by the Political Agent himself that St. Amand was nothing more than an impostor. So that Gulab Singh also could not create such a situation again, the British further decided not to send in the future any messenger direct to Jammu.[35]

And with this failure of Gulab Singh, all of his efforts to receive any countenance from the British came to a naught ; and, as noted in the last Chapter, he was left to plough a lonely furrow against the mighty forces of the Darbar, who took him to Lahore ; but ultimately he succeeded, by diplomacy, of course, in securing his freedom and returning to Jammu.

But after his return, in August 1845, Gulab Singh once again turned to the British. His sister-in-law, the widow of Suchet Singh, wanted to send a letter to Maj. Broadfoot to the effect that she intended to see him personally and that, till her arrival, her late husband's treasure should not be handed over to anyone. Gulab Singh also availed of this opportunity, and deputed a Bilaspuri servant of his, named Shiv Ditta, to carry not only her letter but also a message from himself.[36]

The message said that although Gulab Singh had managed to return to Jammu, threat to his life from the side of the Sikhs had still not abated. On the basis of what he had himself seen and heard during his sufficiently long stay at Lahore, he was further convinced that the British shall have to fight a war with them ; it would rather be forced on them before the end of the approaching winter season. Under these circumstances, he still desired to form an alliance with the British.

35. Broadfoot to Currie, 6 Feb. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 122 ; see also *Ibid.*, 8 Feb. 1845, For. Sec. 4 Apl. 1845, No. 125.
36. Broadfoot to Currie, 14 August 1845, For. Sec. 25 Oct. 1845, No. 46

Shiv Ditta told Maj. Broadfoot that if the British agreed to confirm Gulab Singh's possessions from which he derived a revenue of about twelve lakhs of rupees, the Raja would be willing to attack Lahore from his side with about forty to fifty thousand men. With the support of the British, the emissary further said, Gulab Singh could incite every chief of the hill territories lying between the Sutlej and Afghanistan, including Kashmir[37], to rise against the Lahore authority ; and also divide the Darbar, its army and the country in such a manner that he himself would be able to destroy their power and leave the capital open to be occupied by the British without firing even a single shot. Finally, to allay any apprehensions that the British might still have about the Raja's fidelity, the latter was prepared to send, said Shiv Ditta, not only his sister-in-law but also his only surviving son, Ranbir Singh, as hostage.

Broadfoot gave the Jammu emissary a patient hearing, and also cross-questioned him on certain points. With this little shift now in his attitude towards Gulab Singh's overtures, the basic stand of the Political Agent still remained the same as it was on previous occasions, that is, he had no answer to give to the Raja's message. Broadfoot refused even to acknowledge the receipt of the message which the emissary had put in black and white on his suggestion, and said that the British were opposed to enter into secret deals with any one, much less with the subjects of an ally. To quote his exact words,

> as friends or enemies, the English were sincere, that when forced into war though they spared those who yielded, and rewarded those who served them, yet they made war openly and fairly, trusting to God, and putting down their enemies by their own strength; but......sought peace, and justice, and never war, till driven to it and then openly and, so long as peace could be preserved, never swerved from good faith, and sincerely, still less, took part in the intrigues, or disaffection of the subjects of an ally.[38]

Gulab Singh's latest proposal also was thus spurned, but the Anglo-Sikh war came about exactly as he had prophecied.

37. The Governor of Kashmir and the chiefs of Rajouri and Poonch had, in fact, already secretly offered their allegiance to the British (Ibid. 24 Apl. 1845, For. Sec. 4 July 1845, Nos. 130-33).
38. Ibid., 25 Aug. 1845, For. Sec. 25 Oct. 1845, No. 46; see also. For. Sec. 25 Oct, 1845, No. 48.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Making of the State

At Lahore, after Sardar Jawahar Singh formally assumed the charge of the Wazarat, all was amiss. In the first instance, the event incited the bitter jealousy of Lal Singh, and, as already noted, he began to hold his separate court.[1] Rani Jindan was divided between his family regard for her brother and her illicit attachment to her favourite paramour. Sometime later, however, she was able to effect a reconciliation between the two, and marked her satisfaction by sending each the present of a handsome slave girl. All the three then began gathering life's roses, and there were days, often consecutively, when no state business was transacted. Once, the Wazir sent for the dancing-girls, and "emulating the worst examples at ancient Rome, dressed himself as a dancing girl and danced with them." The Rani also behaved no better. She "lost all her vivacity and sank almost into a state of stupor, from which

1. Supra, 192

she could be roused only by the stimulus of strong drink."[2] Maj. Broadfoot, the British Political Agent, wondered whether he was acting at Lahore as a representative of one government to another or "a sort of parish constable at the door of a brothel."[3] "The excesses of a Commodus or a Messalina were repeated with eastern embroidery, and matters became so bad that all decent people avoided the court as they would a pestilence."[4] A Munshi and three other personal attendants of Jawahar Singh—an old horse jockey, a peon and a former recluse, became the chief counsellors of the Wazir and the Rani.[5]

Such a state of affairs at the capital could not fail to invite disturbances in the country, and Prince Peshora Singh also decided to fish in the troubled waters. Revolting in July 1845, he succeeded in gaining the possession of the fort of Attock, made an offer of Peshawar to the Afghans, and proclaimed himself the Maharaja.

Gulab Singh is said to have played a double game at this stage. He encouraged Jawahar Singh for a vigorous action against the Prince, but supported the latter also. His motive, it is said, was to see the Wazir incur the odium of destroying a prince whose person every Sikh soldier regarded as sacred.[6] Chhattar Singh Attariwala was then ordered to proceed to Attock. Peshora Singh submitted to him on a promise of personal safety. But while being conveyed to Lahore, he was put to death on the orders of Jawahar Singh.[7]

The news of this event was received by the Wazir with profound joy. Immediately the ramparts of the Lahore Fort thundered forth a royal salute, and the city was illuminated at night.[8]

2. Allen, op. cit., pp. 317-18 ; see also Broadfoot to Currie, 14 June, 8 July, 8 Aug. 1845, For. Sec. 5 Sept. 1845, No. 10 ; Hardinge to Ellenborough, 2 July 1845-Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, pp. 88-89.
3. Broadfoot to Currie, 6 Aug. 1845, For. Sec. 5 Sept. 1845, No. 10.
4. Grey, C, op. cit., xxiii.
5. Broadfoot to Currie, 6 Aug. 1845, For. Sec. 5 Sept. 1845, No. 10.
6. Smyth, G. C, op. cit., p. 142 ; Payne, C. H., op. cit., p. 163.
7. Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Relations*, p. 256.
8. Latif, S. M. op. cit., p. 535.

But the nemises also soon overtook the perpetrator of this deed. Jawahar Singh had never been popular with the Khalsa troops. From the day when he threatened to throw himself on the protection of the British, the troops had been looking at him with a suspicious eye. Lal Singh, who had set his heart upon the office of the Wazir, also had for some time been busy in fomenting the mutinous spirit of the army. When, therefore, the murder of Peshora Singh became known, and demonstrations to celebrate it were seen, the fury and indignation of the Khalsa surpassed all bounds. With one voice they swore to take vengeance on the Wazir. In desperation, he wanted to divert the fury of the troops by encouraging them to cross the Sutlej. This move, he believed, would lead either to their destruction at the hands of the British or spread the Khalsa power. But he could not implement it.[9]

Some other chiefs also of the Lahore Darbar, dreading the "vengeance and violence" of the army, looked to the British to get rid of this "nuisance." They wanted a subsidiary system or a general protectorate of the Cis-Sutlej type for the Panjab also. But they received no encouragement.[10]

The resentment and indignation of the army, therefore, not only continued unabated but was stepped up further by the Dogra party at the capital, led by Mian Prithi Singh.[11]. The result was that one day the Panchas met in a council, and resolved that death was the only suitable punishment for Jawahar Singh. He was, accordingly, commanded to appear before the Khalsa on September 21 to answer for his misdeeds.

9. Allen, op. cit., p. 322 ; See also Broadfoot to Currie, 24 May 1845, For. Sec. 20 June 1845, No. 64.
10. Hardinge to Broadfoot, II Sept. 1845 ; Hardinge to Ellenborough, 23 Oct. 1845—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, pp. 91-92; Broadfoot to Currie, 25 Aug. 1845, For. Sec. 25 Oct. 1845, No. 46.
11. According to Sohan Lal Suri (p. 331) Gulab Singh invited Mian Prithi Singh and some other Rajputs, and said to them : "Jawahar Singh is a foolish and ignorant person. Hira Singh died with such a disgrace by his hand. Two or three times he attempted on my life, but by the grace of the real Protector I escaped with life. In whatever way you should go and join the people of the platoons and destroy the foundation of his existence and fix up something by way of reward for the sepoys of the platoons in view of that service."

In vain did his sister threaten and beseech, and in vain were the bribes and protestations of the Wazir himself. "Frantic with fright, he tried gate after gate of the fort, offering everything in his power if the guards would permit him to escape, but though they took the Rs. 50,000 he offered, they refused to permit him go.[12]" The Khalsa had decreed and the decree was inexorable. So, mounted on an elephant, he set out to obey the summons, but in the company of Rani Jindan and Dalip Singh. He hoped that the presence of the Maharja might turn the scales in his favour. On his arrival in the midst of the troops, however, the Maharaja was removed from his side, and his elephant was surrounded. The terrified Wazir bowed before the troops, and, with folded hands, implored them to hear him for a moment. The troops, however, did not allow him to utter even a word. One soldier stabbed him with a bayonet on the left, and as he bent over on the left, another pierced his brain with a bullet. Finally, his body was dragged down the elephant, and mangled by the swords of those who surrounded it.

The next day, Jawahar Singh was cremated, and a number of the ladies of his house immolated themselves with his body. But this event also was "marked by a cruelty and barbarity quite unequalled in the history of this nationality." The soldiers molested, insulted and robbed the *Satis* as they passed by the funeral pyre, and their ear and nose-rings were torn away when they ascended it. One soldier even snatched the waist-band of one of the Satis' lower dress, which was richly embroidered. The hapless women then called down curses that the Panjab should cease to be an independent State, and become desolate, and the wives of the Sikh soldiers also should become widows like themselves[13].

Rani Jindan also, stricken with great grief, upbraided and execrated the whole Khalsa, swearing that she would have her revenge upon them. The Panchas tried to pacify and console her by every means. Having attained their objective, they even expressed

12. Grey, C, op. cit., p. xxiv.
13. Latif, S.M, op. cit., pp. 535-36; Suri, Sohan Lal, op. cit., IV, pp. 332-34; Smyth, G.C, op. cit. pp. 149-52; Grey, C, op. cit., pp. xxiii-xxv.

sorrow over what they had done.[14] But the Rani remained obdurate for some days, then relented, and assumed charge of administration. In October, she was declared Regent of the State. The office of the Wazir, however, remained vacant. The army wanted to confer it on Gulab Singh. But he declined to accept this dangerous honour. Tej Singh also was unwilling. Lots were then drawn, and by some accident or contrivance, the name of Lal Singh turned up. But the Khalsa refused to recognise him. The Rani, therefore, continued to carry on the administration in her own name.

The Lahore Darbar may be said to have been divided at this time into three distinct and mutually antagonistic parties—the Court, the chiefs, and the army. While the Court regarded every chief as a potential enemy, and the chiefs despised and distrusted the Court, the army was dreaded by the both. The judicial murder of Jawahar Singh left the administration of the country once again in the hands of the army. Assuming the title of the *Khalsa Panth* (Supreme Sikh Authority), it began to issue orders under its own seal not only to the local and provincial governors and the commanders but also to the Regent. The chiefs, who were threatened to part with their hoarded wealth to satisfy its cupidity, looked in vain for a ruler strong enough to break its power and establish a government under which they could enjoy the benefits of security. The helplessness of all the civil officials before this army is thus described by J.D. Cunningham :

> Even the Raja of Jammu, always so reasonably averse to a close connexion with the English, began to despair of safety as a feudatory in the hills, or of authority as a minister at Lahore without the aid of the British name, and Lal Singh, Tej Singh, and many others, all equally felt their incapacity to control the troops[15].

But the very omnipotence of the army proved to be the reason d'etre of its destruction. While the internal anarchy had been sapping the vitality of the State, the attitude of the army

14. Suri, Sohan Lal. op. cit., IV, pp. 335-37 ; Smyth, G.C, op. cit , pp. 150-52.
15. Cunningham, J.D, op. cit. pp. 256-57 ; see also Latif, S.M, op. cit., p. 537 ; Banerjee, A.C, *Anglo-Sikh Relations*, 1949, p. 118.

towards their British neighbours had become more and more hostile. This hostility had grown owing to the belief that the settled policy of the British was territorial aggrandisement, and that they were only awaiting a favourable opportunity to occupy the Panjáb. And, as already pointed out, certain circumstances had contributed to strengthen this belief even in the time of Ranjit Singh[16]. The annexation of Sindh by the British in 1843, the establishment of a garrison at Ferozepur, and the strengthening of sundry posts on the Sutlej frontier went to further confirm the Sikh apprehensions. The real intention of the British authorities, as pointed out by modern scholars like Dr. S.S. Bal and remarked by us also in the earlier pages, was, no doubt, to prop up the buffer State of the Panjab and not to launch an aggressive warfare against it. But there is also no denying the fact that the Government of India had been making every preparation to step into the Panjab if and when the alarming anarchy of the army made its disintegration certain[17]. Such a state of affairs could not help the germination of apprehensions and suspicions on both the sides. To make the matters worse, there arose at this time the case of the Cis-Sutlej States.

Although fallen under the protection of the British Government of India, these States were a part of the Lahore Kingdom. The mutinous Khalsa army could, therefore, easily enter them, and create problems for the protectors. To avoid such a contingency, the Government of India contemplated, during the Wazarat of Sardar Jawahar Singh, to take over the complete control of, if not to annex, the Cis-Sutlej States. When the Khalsa army came to know of this intention of the British, it was naturally much excited.[18]

And the Rani and several chiefs endeavoured by every means to inflame this excitement. They showed as much anxiety as the army Panchas for a war with the British, not because they shared their confidence, but because they saw in it an opportunity to

16. Supra, p. 72.
17. Supra, 203-204.
18. Bal S.S., *British Policy Towards, the Panjab*, pp. 65-69.

divert the attention of the army and bring about its ruin. Their plan was the same by which first Pandit Jallah and later Sardar Jawahar Singh also had dreamed up to get rid of this troublesome element[19]. The independence of their country might be curtailed, but they considered it better to hold office under the protection of the British Government than to remain subservient to the untamable troops. Hence, instead of denouncing the crossing of the Sutlej, they laid themselves out to feed the excitement of the troops, and spur the Panchas to action. The Khalsa was thus "swept into the vortex of intrigue" by its own leaders.

To narrate briefly the events leading to the First Anglo-Sikh War, first of all reports were ingeniously circulated of the ill-treatment meted out by the British to the people of the Cis-Sutlej States and of the British intentions to take possession of this part of the Lahore Kingdom. In the beginning of November 1845, when a great alarm and excitement had been generated by these reports, Lal Singh convened a meeting of the chiefs, officers and the army Panchas. To this assembly, Diwaa Dina Nath read out a letter which, he said, had been sent by the Sikh officers of the Cis-Sutlej States, intimating that the British really intended to seize those States. He further said that there was turmoil in Peshawar and Kashmir also. The enemies of the kingdom were, in fact, raising their head everywhere because there was no recognized head of the State and Dalip Singh was only a boy. The prime need of the hour was, therefore, speedy arrangements for the maintenance of the Sikh rule and power, otherwise its collapse was inevitable. And the wish of the Rani, the Diwan said, was that Lal Singh should be the Wazir aad Tej Singh the Commander-in-Chief of the army. After this was done, she would sanction the march of the army across the Sutlej for the protection of the national honour.

So much were the assembled swayed by this eloquent speech that the proposed appointments were approved with loud acclamations, and a cry for war also was made unanimously. Preparations for the projected invasion soon followed, and the soldiers expatiated on the spoils they hoped to bring from Delhi, Mathura and Benaras, for nothing short of the subjugation of all India was thought of.

19. Supra, 214.

On November 17, war against the British was formally declared, and march of the army also ordered[20]. According to the plan, the army was to be split into seven divisions ; one was to remain at the capital, another was to go to Peshawar, and the remaining were to proceed against Rupar, Ludhiana, Hariki, Ferozepur and Sindh. Gulab Singh also was asked to march but towards Attock and not against the British.[21]

The Raja of Jammu, no doubt, cherished hostile feelings towards the Lahore Darbar, but still he advised the Rani not to court disaster by waging war against the British[22], who had given no cause of offence. "Lend, therefore, an ear to my advice," he wrote her, "guard yourself cautiously against such an intention, and never plant your foot on that country" (of the British).[23]

But the Darbar went ahead with its plan and fixed 11 A.M. as the auspicious time on 18th for the march of the army. When, however, the hour arrived, not a single chief stirred from his house.[24] Lal Singh showed unwillingness to assume the command of his troops. He complained that the war with the British would bring nothing but destruction, and that the army was driving him into it. Consequently, he prepared to chicken himself out across the Sutlej. Tej Singh accused the Rani of pushing them to a certain death.

Thus, the Rani and the chiefs, who had incited the army for the war, now stood mortified. "They had raised the storm but were powerless to direct or allay it[25]". When the officers and the Panchas protested to the Rani against the inaction of the chiefs, another auspicious time was fixed. They also proposed that she and the Maharaja should lead them. But the Rani silenced them

20. Latif, S.M. op. cit., pp. 537-38 ; Smyth, G.C., op. cit., pp. 168-70.
21. Pol. Agent to C-in-C, 20 Nov. 1845—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, pp. 123-24.
22. Panjab Intelligence, 2 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 368.
23. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 298.
24. Broadfoot to Govt., 21 Nov. 1845—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, p. 124.
25. Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Relations*, pp. 262-63.

by complaining that the soldiers were not putting their heart into the war and instead going to their homes as soon as they got their pay[26]. Terrified, she also tried to contact the British Political Agent, but he dismissed her messenger for want of proper credentials[27].

The march of the army ultimately came off, but still in a leisurely fashion. It was not before December 11 that some detachments began to cross the Sutlej between Hariki and Kasur, and on 14th a portion of the army took up a position within a few kilometres of Ferozepur.[28].

On December 13, Lord Hardinge, the Governor-General of India, also declared war against the Lahore Darbar. He accused the Sikhs of invading the British territories without any provocation, and confiscated their possessions on the left bank of the Sutlej. The personal property of late Suchet Singh, Dhian Singh and some other chiefs of the Darbar in India was also taken possession of.[29]

The Commander-in-Chief of the Lahore army of invasion was, however, still at the capital. In Lal Singh also the troops had no confidence. It was he, they said, who had instigated them against the British for selfish reasons and without making proper arrangements for the supplies etc. Hence, they wanted Gulab Singh to lead them. Plans for the removal of the Wazir and the Commander-in-Chief were accordingly, discussed, and even their murder was contemplated.[30] On December 6, however, the army Panchas decided to arrest Lal Singh as well as Dewan Dina Nath, Bakshi Bhagat Ram, Faqir Nur-ud-Din, Bhai Ram Singh and some other chiefs, and hand them over to Gulab Singh for any punishment he would deem fit. It was further agreed upon to invest the Jammu Raja with absolute powers for the government

26. Broadfoot to Govt., 21 Nov. 1845—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, pp. 124-25.
27. Abstract of Lahore letters, 2-3 Dec. 1845, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 210.
28. Cunningham, J. D., op. cit., p. 258.
29. For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 364 ; Panjab Intelligence, 4 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 370.
30. Broadfoot to Currie, 20 Nov. 1845, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 184 ; Ibid, 5 Dec. 1845, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 210.

of the county, and retire the Rani with a jagir for her mintenance. The boy Maharaja was to be placed under the wings of Gulab Singh till he came of age. If the Rani objected to this plan, she was to be chained, and confined in a fort. In the case of their expedition also against the British, the Panchas decided to be guided by the will of the hill chief ; they would carry on the war if he led them, and retreat if he opted for peace.[31]

But Gulab Singh had by now lost all confidence in the sincerity and steadfastness of the Lahore army, and, therefore, made up his mind to "serve the English Government with heart and soul." He sent to Bhai Ram Singh a very plain message to the effect that

> nothing permanent can be accomplished without the intervention of the English ; that the Sikh army is now calling for him and wishes to destroy the men now in power ; that he puts no trust in the Sikh army ; that his brothers and relatives and dependents lost their lives in Lahore ; that if he goes to Lahore without some good and well secured arrangement the army will destroy him also.

Bhai Ram Singh conveyed these feelings of Gulab Singh to the British Vakil at the Lahore Darbar, with the further remarks that "if the slightest hint is given everyone will be brought into submission to the Company's Government.[32]"

The Lahore troops had, therefor, to remain content with the leadership of Lal Singh and Tej Singh, and fought their first battle at Mudki on December 20, 1845. The Sikhs crossed the Sutlej near Ferozepur, but instead of attacking the small British garrison at that place, Lal Singh provoked them to march to Mudki where most of the British troops were concentrating. His idea, it seems, was that the troublesome army would meet its Waterloo there. According to Peter Nicholson, the Assistant Political Agent at Ferozepur, Lal Singh "induced the troops to march (in that direction) in the hope of his so doing being considered a recommendation of him by the British Goverment." Earlier, the Lahore Wazir had wished to be assured by the same

31. Ibid, 8 Dec. 1845, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 213.
32. Copy of a letter from British Vakil at Lahore, 6 Dec. 1845, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No 215.

Assistant Agent that the British would consider him and the Rani their "friends" and would "cut up the *Burchas* for them."[33]

No wonder, the Lahore troops were beaten in the battle of Mudki. The British then decided to follow up their victory by an immediate attack on Ferozeshah, to which place their enemy had retreated. But what followed on 21st proved to be "one of the most fiercely contested battles ever fought in India," and the day ended without any decision. Lal Singh, however, remained hidden in a ditch, and, when the night fell, escaped to Amritsar.[34] Tej Singh had taken up his position opposite Ferozepur. When he appeared at Ferozeshah the next day, the British were faced with an ominous situation. But he only skirmished, and, after some time, "precipitately fled, leaving his subordinates without orders and without an object, at a moment when the artillery ammunition of the English had failed, when a portion of their force was retiring upon Ferozepur, and when no exertions could have saved the remainder if the Sikhs had boldly pressed forward."[35]

The battle of Ferozeshah also was thus lost by the Sikhs, although the British had to pay a heavy price for their victory.

Then followed a lull. The British waited for the siege-train from Delhi, while reinforcements gradually arrived from Meerut, Agra and Subathu. The Lahore army, on the other hand, working under the direction of their Panchas, knew not what to do next. On January 6, 1846, however, a section of theirs, under Ranjoor Singh Majithia, obtained a victory in a skirmish near Ludhiana, and their sagging spirit was somewhat restored with this.

But the Sikh Commander-in-Chief complained to the British authorities that his men were not obeying him. On January 12, he sent a cofidential agent with a letter to his counterpart on the other side. This agent was, however, caught by some Sikh soldiers, and publicly disgraced and humiliated. Tej Singh then deputed another man, named Ram Dass, to tell the British Commander-in-

33. Bal, S.S., *British Policy towards the Panjab*, p. 72 ; Kohli, Sita Ram, *Snnset*, p. 106 ; Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, II, pp. 47-48.
34. Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset*, p. 110.
35. Bal, S.S., op. cit., pp. 73-74 ; Khushwant Singh, *History*, II, p. 50.

Chief verbally that he had tried his best but failed to prevent the Khalsa troops from crossing the Sutlej ; that his men were not obeying his orders, with the result that he was helpless ; but he was willing to come to terms for himself.[36]

It was under these circumstances of treachery and defeat that the Lahore army made persistent entreaties to Gulab Singh to come and lead them in the war. Once, as many as five hundred men of the infantry and cavalry came to Jammu on behalf of the whole Khalsa with the request that Gulab Singh should assume their leadership. They told him that they had taken solemn oath to act upon his advice, whether it was for war or peace. But Gulab Singh, while professing to be a humble servant of the Khalsa and agreeing to do whatever was concertedly settled by the Rani, the chiefs and the *Serbat Khalsa*, asked them whether the British had given any cause of offence ; and if not, why had they abandoned the policy of friendship towards them, the policy to which even their mighty Maharaja Ranjit Singh had adhered to ; and what had they gained by taking to the war-path. The Panchas, in reply, disclaimed their responsibility for the rupture with the British, and begged the Raja to find out who was at the bottom of it. Gulab Singh, thereupon, crossed his hands, and remarked that since the murder of Dhian Singh everything was in the mess, and everybody was doing what he liked ; it was, therefore, better for him to sit still and allow the others to do as it pleased them.[37]

While the Lahore army thus pressed Glub Singh to come to Lahore, Rani Jindan forbade him to stirr unless and until she required him. And as he himself also was not in sympathy with the war party, he took to a temporising policy. While budging not even an inch, he professed to be getting ready to leave at the earliest opportunity. The messengers of the army were permitted to call upon him wherever he was and whatever was he doing. If Alexander Gardner is to be believed, all the wheat-carrying animals

36. For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 321.
According to S.S. Thorburn (p. 61) and Khushwant Singh (History, II, p. 50), Tej Singh himself visited the British camp, and had an interview with Lord Hardinge.

37. Panjab Intelligence, 29 January 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 363.

in the Raja's territories were mobilized, loaded amidst great publicity with about one-fourth of what they normally carried, and despatched in a file. With placards in Gurmukhi hanging round their necks, stating that they were carrying supplies from Gulab Singh, this endless procession of the animals gave the impression that "incessant and enormous supplies were being forwarded to the stalwart and devoted Khalsa by their loyal and affectionate friend." "I am not going empty-handed to the great campaign that is to end at Calcutta," he said. "When all is ready for campaigning, off I start. This will be a long war. It is a race to the capital, and devil catch the hindmost."[38]

With the British authorities also Gulab Singh simultaneously tried to establish contacts. Bansi Dhar Ghosh,[39] a Bengali, had been serving him as his personal physician for the last seven years[40]. Trusted as he was, Gulab Singb sent him to Lt. Lake, the Assistant Political Agent at Ludhiana. Reaching his destination on January 15, 1846, Bansi Dhar told Lake that his master was even now willing to do the British a good turn if they agreed to "confirm to him and his heirs for ever the jagirs which are at present held by himself and the different members of his family." The Raja was further prepared to pay to the British a tribute to the extent of 25 per cent of the total revenue which he derived from his possessions.

As the Assistant Agent was ignorant of his Government's policy towards such overtures, he promised the Jammu emissary to place Gulab Singh's proposal before the proper authorities without any loss of time. But acting on his own, under the impulse of promoting the British interests, he also gave Bansi Dhar a letter for his master, which said that

> He who wishes to climb to the summit of a lofty mountain, must start at day break ; should he delay, night may close over him, ere he has gained the desire of his heart. The

38. Pearse, Hugh, op. cit., pp. 269-70.
39. Kirpa Ram (p. 304) gives his name as Nandgir.
40. He first met the Raja at Benaras where the latter had gone on a pilgrimage.

treasure which is buried in the depths of the mountains will become the prize of that man who is the first to reach its summit.

Besides Gulab Singh, many other chiefs also of the Lahore Darbar entered into secret communication with Lt. Lake at this stage "Hardly a day passes," the Assistant Agent informed Capt. Mills, "without my receiving intimation that some of the chiefs opposed to us wish to make terms for themselves." Helpless to give them any reply, he gave at least a patient hearing to all of their overtures in the hope that such a course would "create a distrust of each other, which must prove most favourable to us in the event of an engagement.[41]"

The Governor-General of India, however, did not approve of giving a written reply, even though vague, to Gulab Singh's messenger, and told Lake, for his future guidance, to give only "verbal replies to all parties who may come to him with overtures but will at the same time explain that he has no authority to hear their story and can refer him to Major Lawrence." Regarding Gulab Singh's emissary, however, Lt. Lake was further instructed to send him to Henry Lawrence for "a fitting answer to his communication". Lawrence was then on his way to take charge of the Agency at Ludhiana[42].

Although we have not been able to lay our hands on a definite evidence, yet we presume from the following private letter of January 31, 1846, from Lord Hardinge to his wife that Bansi Dhar Ghosh later did meet Lawrence, and that they discussed the Raja's proposal. Hardinge wrote :

> I have a communication from Raja Gulab Singh which may lead to overtures for an arrangement; he is to be made minister and says he is ready to do whatever we like to order. I am obliged to be very cold and haughty ; but propose to allow him to come to propose terms and make a beginning. It is indispensable that the Sikh Army should be disbanded. Their state of anarchy and mutiny is the cause of all the mischief.[43]

41. Lake to Mills, 15 Jan. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 319.
42. Foreign Deptt. to Mills, 17 Jan. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 320.
43. Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, p. 101.

This marks a significant shift in the British attitude towards Gulab Singh and other chiefs of the Lahore Darbar. In the beginning, they were not prepared even to listen to the overtures of anyone ; but before the outbreak of the war, they had begun to lend their ears to all ; and now they were nearly encouraging them.

In the meantime another deputation of the Panchas arrived at Jammu with a request from the Lahore cavalry for Gulab Singh to join them. The Raja then solicited orders of the Darbar on the course of action he was to adopt,[44] and himself went on a pilgrimage first to Vaishno Devi and then to Purmandal. Meanwhile summons from the Rani also arrived,[45] whereupon he left for Lahore in the company of the Panchas. As soon as he reached near the Ravi, he sent Baba Mian Singh and Dewan Jawala Sahai to the Darbar to announce his arrival. Bhai Ram Singh, Bakshi Bhagat Ram and Dewan Dina Nath were then deputed to receive the Raja. This happened on January 29, 1846.[46]

Gulab Singh was accompanied by his son, Ranbir Singh, nephew, Mian Jawahar Singh, about four thousand horse and foot,[47] and five hundred other Rajputs of his clan. When conducted to the presence of the Maharaja and the Rani, he offered his condolences on the death of Sardar Jawahar Singh. A discussion on the affairs of the State then followed and the Rani said that "the Khalsa were now the masters," and "she had no further power of living." The Raja remarked that he too was now weak and

44. Panjab Intelligence, 29 Jan. 1846. For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 363
45. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 304.
46. Panjab Intelligence. 29 Jan. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 363.
Alexander Gardner is wrong when he says that Guab Singh reached Lahore after the Battle of Sobroan which was fought on February 10. His contention that the British forces lay between those of the Sikhs and the Dogras is, therefore, a figment of imagination. (See Pearse, Hugh, op. cit., pp. 270-71).
Bikramajit Hasrat (*Relations*, pp. 276-77) also commits a factual error when he says that Gulab Singh arrived at Lahore on December 27, 1845, and his allegations against the Raja of a treacherous role at the capital before January 29, 1846, are, accordingly, unfounded.
47. According to some other sources, Gulab Singh was accompanied by 12,000 or 20,000 men. (See Satinder Singh, Bawa, op. cit., p. 111).

powerless ; that earlier when his brothers were alive, there was perfect unity and harmony among the Dogras and the Sikhs ; but now the conditions were different. Whatever the facts, he was told, the whole Khalsa still looked to him for guidance. The Raja, thereupon, replied that the wishes of the Khalsa were law to him, and with this his first meeting with the Rani ended.[48]

The next day, he was visited by the army Panchas. When they requested him to take charge of their affairs, he told them that he had neither necklaces nor bracelets to order them to fight. He also wondered how had they dared to challenge the British who were "the sovereigns down to the farthest boundary of Sindh." The Panchas replied that the Khalsa "never expected that the English Company had the power of showering down cannon shot like drops of rain ; if the English armies would leave off the use of these cannons, and come out and fight with the sword and musket, it would then be seen who were the best rulers." Now that the war had begun, they begged the Raja to give them lead, and proposed to lace him with the authority of the Wazir, which "differed little from actual sovereignty." But still no definite promise dropped off his lips.[49]

In a Darbar on January 31, where Gulab Singh also was present, the Panchas of the regular troops openly accused the Rani and the chifs of a conspiracy to destroy them by pushing them across the Sutlej. Then they asked her to confer the Wazarat on the Jammu Raja in her own interest ; and when she tried to procrastinate, they warned that if their demand was not conceded by the evening they would put her, the Maharaja, Dewan Dina Nath, Bhai Ram Singh and Bakshi Bhagat Ram to death.

Just then came the news of yet another defeat of the Lahore army at Aliwal. In the battle which was fought on January 28, Ranjoor Singh could not withstand the onslaught of the British,

48. Panjab Intelligence, 29 January 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 363.
49. Ibid., 30 Jan. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 364.
According to Bawa Satinder Singh (p. 111), Gulab Singh showed his willingness to fight, but independently and not in conjunction with the Lahore troops who were prone to run away.

and fled to his own side of the Sutlej. Alarmed and agitated over the repeated reverses, the Panchas held the Rani responsible for these, and expressed their resolve to punish her and the chiefs in an unforgetable manner. Gulab Singh also felt highly distressed. He said that in the time of Sher Singh the State treasury contained crores of rupees, but there had been a systematic plundering of it after his death, and sensational disclosures might be made if an enquiry was made in this matter.

So much were the Rani and her advisers terrified at the pronouncements of the army Panchas that then and there was Gulab Singh raised to the pedestal of the Wazarat. Giving an indication of the policy which he was to follow in his new capacity, he said that his first task would be to find out the persons who had caused the war, and then hand them over to the Government of India.[50]

If anybody still entertained any doubt about the views of the Jammu Raja, this was removed when the latter held his first regular Darbar on February 1. Declaring that the war against the British was a folly, he caused letters to be written to all the chiefs and officers, both at the capital and on the front, stating that they had crossed the Sutlej border without any provocation from the other side, and that now they should sit tight and move not even a finger without his order, as he was "supreme in everything."

A decision to send an embassy of friendship and peace to the Government of India was also then taken. It was also decided to ascertain the views of the army on the question of war and peace, and necessary steps were taken to do so.

When all this had been done, Bhai Ram Singh recommended that the life of Lal Singh should be spared. Gulab Singh told him to be at ease.[51] But the Bhai wanted a clear assurance from the Raja, and, therefore, raised this issue again the next day. The Rani also then begged for the life of her lover. Gulab Singh,

50. Ibid., 31 Jan. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 365. But according to Bawa Satinder Singh (p. 112), Gulab Singh proclaimed his intention to commence guerilla warfare in the British territories beyond the Sutlej.
51. Ibid., 1 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 367.

however, said that Lal Singh "had destroyed the kingdom of Lahore, and must answer for it to the Khalsa."

As a number of the army Panchas were at variance with Gulab Singh's policy towards the British, they urged him to go to the front, and lead the Khalsa in the war. But he told them in unequivocal terms that his own inclination was towards peace, and his considered opinion was that "the armies of the Khalsa could never cope with the English. The reverses they had suffered in all the three battles also suggested the policy of peace. He was, however, prepared to fight as well, for he was a Rajput, and it did not behove a Rajput to shrink from war ; but he would do so only if the Khalsa, all the chiefs and the Rani gave him in writing that, first, they would fight with determination and not run away ; secondly, he would have the authority to award any punishment to those who ran away ; and, thirdly, they would uphold any treaty that he might make with the British, even if by that treaty the city of Lahore was surrendered as an offering or a tribute. These were his terms for war ; if these were acceptable, he told them, he would lead them ; and if not, let those who differed with him make their own arrangements.

All the troops and the officers stationed at the capital left the final decision to Gulab Singh, and agreed to be guided by him whether for war or peace on whatever terms.[52] The Panchas, however, still insisted on the continuance of the war, and persisted that the Raja should proceed to the front. But he stuck to his guns, and suggested them to select another man for the job as there were many other men among the Khalsa who were wiser and better generals than he was. Dewan Dina Nath intervened at this stage to say that it would do better if Gulab Singh worked at the capital. But he also remarked that "it was the Khalsa alone who had brought the kingdom to the ebb of destruction." This utterance lashed the Panchas into a fury ; they retorted : "the Khalsa has only marched, crossed, and fought by the orders and direction of the Sirkar, and the advice of the Sirdars ; that they had Perwanahs to that effect written by Dina Nath himself and signed by the Rani; the Sirdars affected now to deny all knowledge."

52. Ibid., 2 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 368.

The situation might have taken an ugly turn but for the intervention of Gulab Singh who told the Panchas that it was now useless to quarrel with the Dewan ; and that if they were still spoiling for the war, let them have it, no body would stop them ; but left to himself, he would conclude peace with the British.[53]

Earlier, in their encounter with the British near Ludhiana, Ranjoor Singh and some other Sikh generals had captured some Europeans, and sent them to Amritsar. Gulab Singh now proposed that these prisoners be treated well, and sent back to their camp.[54] They were, accordingly, brought to the capital, provided with cash, dresses and wine also.[55]

It was reported that Lal Singh was the first to have taken to flight in the battle of Firozeshah, and the whole Khala camp had followed him ; and Nihal Singh of Aloo and the jagirdars of the Doab and Kohistan had done likewise in that of Ludhiana.[56] Orders were given to the provincial governors to arrest all such soldiers belonging to their areas as had run away from the battle-field of Ludhiana.

Finding the Darbar in a quandary, a number of hill chiefs had kicked up dust in their territories. Necessary measures to bring them to book were also ordered to be taken.[57]

But on February 4 a great consternation prevailed in the Darbar when it was reported that the British were surveying the banks of the Sutlej with a view to crossing it and marching on Lahore. The Rani begged Gulab Singh to do what he could to save the kingdom.[58]

The Raja of Jammu received, at this stage, a letter from Henry Lawrence, saying that the British "appreciated his (Gulab

53. Ibid., 4 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 370.
54. Ibid., 2 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 367 ; Ibid. 6 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 370.
55. Ibid., 9 and 10 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 370 ; M'Gregor, W.L. op. cit., II. pp. 59-60.
56. Ibid., 2 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 368 ; Ibid, 8 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 370.
57. Ibid., 2 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 368 ; Ibid., 5,6,7,10 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 370.
58. Ibid., 4,5 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 370.

Singh's) wisdom in not having taken up arms against us, and that his interests would be taken into consideration" at the time of settling the affairs of the Panjab."[59] Gulab Singh was given this assurance because, to quote Lord Hardinge, his "neutrality was most valuable before I crossed the river."[60] This assurance might also refer to Hardinge's "arrangement", with the Raja in response to the latters' overtures made through Bansi Dhar Ghosh.

That Gulab Singh remained "neutral" in the war is undoubtedly true. But this posture he had adopted since its very commencement and not after the British had wanted him to do so. What is more important is the fact that he never tried to keep anybody in the dark about his views on the war, and consistently, persistently and publicly condemned it. No treachery can, therefore, be attributed to him. Even now, despite a very tempting offer from the British, he did not allow the interests of the Lahore Darbar to suffer. While still refusing to take any active part in the hostilities, he exerted himself to meet the situation created by the British threat to cross the Sutlej. Immediate instructions were thus issued by him for strengthening the defences at the capital by repairing the walls and the ditches and placing the guns in their proper position. Tej Singh also was ordered to keep utmost vigilance over the forts and ferriers, and strive every nerve to prevent the British forces from crossing the river.[61] Similar orders were given to Ranjoor Singh as well, and twenty-one more guns were sent to him from the capital.[62]

Next, two emissaries, Lala Anant Ram and Chuni Lal, were sent on a mission of peace to the Governor-General of India. They went with a letter from Gulab Singh, which said that "the invasion by the Sikhs was carried out of haughtiness due to the minority of Maharaja Dalip Singh", and "requested for the stability of Lahore kingdom in view of the friendship of the late Maharaja."[63]

Khalifa Nur-ud-Din also was asked to proceed to the British camp in order to "appease the anger" of the Governor-General.

59. Hardinge to Ellenborough, 7 June, 1846—Bikramajit Hasrat, *Papers*, pp. 94-95.
60. Ibid., 21 June 1846, Hasrat. Bikramajit, *Papers*, p. 94.
61. Panjab Intelligence, 4, 5 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 370.
62. Ibid., 7 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 370.
63. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 305-06.

But he doubted the success of his mission "as he was sure that the Governor-General would never agree to the proposition of the Khalsa, nor the Khalsa to those of the Governor-General." And he seemed to be right, for the Khalsa was adamant to fight. For what purpose had Gulab Singh come to Lahore if he was not to join the army on the front, they asked the Rani. But the Raja also was determined not to be dictated by the army. Hence, he proposed to the Rani that the army would have to be disciplined and taught to respect their superiors.[64] That was, however, to be attempted after the conclusion of the war, and immediately the army had to be cajoled. Hence, two months' pay was proposed to be sent for disbursement among the troops.[65] The Raja even promised to leave Lahore at the auspicious time.[66]

But the troops had by now lost all control, cohesion and direction so that no measure of the government could be effective as regards them. Thus, while the Panchas were not prepared to give the government any choice other than a vigorous prosecution of the war, the soldiers took the law into their hands and began to leave their lines and go to their homes without seeking permission from their commanders. The officers of the regular troops clearly mentioned that their men were least bothered whether the government waged war or sued for peace; the chief concern of the soldiers was their pay which should be rupees twelve and not less even by a farthing. Disregarding all these facts as well as definite instructions of Gulab Singh to do nothing without his permission, Tej Singh and his men, on the other hand, again began to move to the south side of the Sutlej in order to give another battle to the British.[67]

It has already been noted that the Lahore Darbar had declared the war without making proper arrangements for the supplies. The consequences of the delinquency appeared now, and great scarcity of food was felt at the capital as well as on the front. When, therefore, Ranjoor Singh asked for more supplies of ration, his

64. Panjab Intelligence, 6 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 370.
65. Ibid., 7 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 370.
66. Henry, G.A., *Through the Sikh War*, Rep. 1970, pp. 120-21.
67. Panjab Intelligence, 7 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 370.

demand could not be met with. Gulab Singh had taken charge of the affairs less than a week ago. He needed time to set the things right. But he addressed himself to the work immediately. The duty on corn was remitted for a period of fifteen days so that the traders were encouraged to bring it to the capital in large quantities.

There were some other reasons also to deny Ranjoor Singh additional supplies. In the first instance, he had already drawn these in a quantity which was far beyond his requirements, and, secondly, he abandoned them when he fled away from the battle-field.[68] Such a course under the circumstances then prevailing was fatal, and had to be discouraged.

Alexander Gardner also has described the shortage of supplies in his own way. Starved for want of rations, he says, the troops sent to Lahore a deputation of five hundred men in order to bring supplies. The Rani, apprehending an attack by these men on her person. prepared to meet them only after adequate security measures had been taken. And when the meeting took place, she said that Gulab Singh had already forwarded large supplies to them. "No, he has not", protested the deputation, "we know the old fox ; he has not sent breakfast for a bird (*Chiria-ki-haziri*)." Accusing them for offering lame excuses, the Rani, says Gardner, then took off her petticoat and flung it over the heads of the angry men, saying, "Wear that, you cowards ! I will go in trousers and fight myself !"[69]

Reproducing this event, J.H. Gordon says, "The resolve to get them destroyed was known to them, but such was the stern democratic discipline of their army councils, such their devotion to their warlike faith, that determination even now animated every man. They fiercely reproached her and her courtiers. Addressing the Maharaja, they said, 'We will go and die for you, your kingdom, and the Khalsaji', but to the others who had incited them to war and now taunted them with their folly in hoping to vanquish the conquerors of Hindustan, 'we will leave you to answer to your God and your Guru, while we, deserted and betrayed as we

68. Ibid, 5, 9 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 370.
69. Pearse, Hugh, op. cit., pp. 272-73.

are, will do what we can to preserve the independence of our country."[70]

The Rani, the chiefs and the Panchas, all were thus eager to carry on the war; and yet J.D. Cunningham accusses Gulab Singh of a conspiracy to cause the battle of Sobroan. According to the scholar :

> The English......intimated to Gulab Singh their readiness to acknowledge a Sikh sovereignty in Lahore after the army should have been disbanded ; but the Raja declared his inability to deal with the troops, which still overawed him and other well-wishers to the family of Ranjit Singh. This helplessness was partly exaggerated for selfish objects ; but time pressed ; the speedy dictation of a treaty under the walls of Lahore was essential to the British reputation ; and the views of either party were in some sort met by an understanding that the Sikh army should be attacked by the English, and that when beaten it should be openly abandoned by its own government ; and further, that the passage of the Sutlej should be unopposed and the road to the capital laid open to the victors. Under such circumstances of discrete policy and shameless treason was the battle of Sobroan fought.[71]

It needs no argument to show that J.D. Cunningham is highly prejudiced against Gulab Singh. We know that the Khalsa army was definitely not amenable to Gulab Singh, and, whether the British wanted it or not, he was in absolutely no position to disband it. Even a word from his mouth to that effect was sure to invite his destruction. Cunningham's charge of the treacherous understanding between the Jammu Raja and the British also is not tenable. What was the understanding ? That the British should make another assault on the Lahore troops and defeat them ? Were the British unwilling to do so and, therefore, needed some inducement by Gulab Singh ? But Cunningham himself says that they wanted to dictate a treaty under the walls of Lahore itself. Or, were the Sikhs seeking peace that the Raja of Jammu had to offer the British some bribe for the continuance of war ? The fact

70. Gordon, J.H., op. cit., pp. 146-47.
71. Cunningham, J.D., op. cit., pp. 278-79 ; see also Banerjee, A.C., op. cit., pp. 137-38 ; Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset*, pp. 113-14 ; Gordon, J.H., op. cit., p. 146.

is that left to themselves the Sikh troops might have gone in for another round after Sobroan. Then, what part was Gulab Singh expected to play ? Could he ensure the success of the British or defeat of the Khalsa in the following battle ? If so, how ? What was his hold over the Lahore troops actually participating in the war ? It may be argued that he could come to an understanding with the Lahore commanders. But there is no proof, not even a remote hint, to that effect ; nor has Cunningham made any such allegation against him. Morever, these commanders were already in league with the British. Where was, therefore, the need to seek the help of Gulab Singh ? Lastly, what the Raja of Jammu actually did in order to oppose the crossing of the Sutlej by the British before the battle of Sobroan completely knocks the bottom out of the charge treasonable understanding. Not only this, as we shall subsequently see, even after the battle when the British were intent upon marching on the Panjab capital in order to ratify the peace treaty under its walls, Gulab Singh tried his best to frustrate their designs. Thus we see that his conduct was consistently scrupulous throughout the war. It is a different matter that he was opposed to the war, but, as already pointed out, he never tried to keep his opposition secret from any body. Even as late as February 8, he told the Panchas in a Darbar that he had no faith in them, and was still of the opinion that peace would do more good to the Panjab than war.[72] But no body listened to him, and on 10th was fought the last battle of the First Anglo Sikh War.

As usual, Tej Singh forsook his army at Sobroan, and, as he fled, "either accidently or by design sank a boat in the middle of the communication.[73] Lal Singh also played false. Before the battle commenced, he sent detailed information on the dispositions of the Khalsa troops to Henry Lawrence, who had taken charge of the North-Western Agency on January 21.[74] Again the British were victorious.

At Lahore, "everybody was thunder struck" when informed of of their latest defeat.[75] Their alarm mounted further when it was

72. Panjab Intelligence, 8 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 370.
73. Bal, S S., op. cit., p. 76.
74. Ibid, Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset*, p. 114.
75 Panjab Intelligence, 10 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 370.

learnt that the victorious forces had started crossing the Sutlej; and by 12th they had actually advanced as far as Kasur, about fifty kilometres away from Lahore. That the battle of Sobroan would be the immediate signal for a march by the British on the capital of the Panjab, was never anticipated by the Lahore Dárbar. "The kingdom of the Panjab", said Gulab Singh, "was now entirely gone, that nothing remained, the English troops were now advancing to the capital. What was to be done?" But the Rani looked to him for guidance. He then asked her, the Maharaja, Bhai Ram Singh, Dewan Dina Nath, Khalifa Nur-ud-Din, General Golab Singh Pohovindia, Bakshi Bhagat Ram and some other chiefs to give him in writing that they would stand by whatever step he took, and support him in punishing any body who opposed him. This was readily done, and the document so executed was sent to Tej Singh and Lal Singh for their signatures.

Some of the Panchas, however, criticised Gulab Singh for sitting quietly at Lahore while the Khalsa troops were being beaten at Sobroan. But he retorted that they had commenced the hostilities before his arrival and had also run away from the battle-field; that had he joined the war, he would have sacrificed his life and not turned back.

Soon after a message was brought by Chuni Lal and Anant Ram from the Governor-General of India and his Agent, saying "that if there was any wish to preserve the kingdom of Lahore, Raja Gulab Singh must come at once, no other course remained."[76] A letter dated February 11 from Henry Lawrence in reply to one from Gulab Singh was also received. It said:

> Although...it is difficult at this time to know the rebels and non-rebels, yet the vigilant officials of the British Government do not at all feel happy at the anarchy of the Lahore State...In the opinion of the British Goverment such law and order should be restored that in future anarchy and breach of covenants should not even be thought of, not to speak of committing it. Consequently, as a token of friendship this situation has been explained in detail, Lala Anant Ram will personally explain the matters. In case of delay in carrying them out matters may grow worse.[77]

76. Ibid, 12 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 370.
77. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 306-07; see also Panikar, K.M., op. cit., pp. 94-95.

On receipt of these messages, it was decided that Gulab Singh should lose no time in meeting the wishes of the British authorities so that their further march towards the capital was stopped and peace concluded at an early date.[78] Two communications, "full of lamentations at the occurrence of the late events, and announcing the immediate arrival" of the Raja were, accordingly, drawn up, and sent to the Governor-General and his Agent. But before he actually left, Gulab Singh made it clear to the Rani that "whatever was the pleasure of the Governor-General with regard to the kingdom of Lahore would be complied with." But she bound the Raja by oaths to protect the life of Lal Singh.

So that the war leaders made no more mischief, Gulab Singh also issued peremtory orders to Lal Singh and Tej Singh not to take up arms so long as he carried on negotiations with the British. He then placed some Hindustani soldiers and four hundred hillmen in the city fort, and directed Mian Jawahar Singh and Ranbir Singh to keep a strict guard over it till his return. Finally, on February 13, he mounted an elephant, visited the *Samadh* of Ranjit Singh, and, in the company of Dewan Dina Nath, Khalifa Nur-ud-Din, Sultan Mohammad Khan and about two thousand soldiers, departed on his journey to Kasur to settle the terms of peace, or what may be called to do the work of the politicians after that of the soldiers had ended.[79]

78. Panjab Intelligence, 12 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 370.
79. Ibid, 13 Feb. 1846, For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, No. 370.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Making of the State (Continued)

Gulab Singh and the Lahore chiefs accompanying him reached Kasur on February 15, 1846. They were, however, treated by Lord Hardinge, the Governor-General of India, as the representatives of an offending government. No outward cermonial marked their reception, and no salute was fired. Even their proferred *Nazars* and complimentary offerings were refused. Hardinge pointed out to them that the past conduct of both the chiefs and the army had been most unwarrantable, and the offence which their government had committed was most serious as it had been perpetrated without any provocation on the part of the British and in the face of a treaty of amity and friendship. He also let them know of his determination to show to the whole world that such insults were not to be offered to the Government of India with impunity.

But Gulab Singh's personal conduct the Governor-General

appreciated in no unmistakable terms, and said that he recognized the wisdom, prudence and good-feelings shown by the former in keeping himself aloof from the hostile and perfidious transactions of the Lahore Darbar. In the most marked manner, he further expressed the satisfaction that a person, who had taken no part in the offence and whose good-feelings towards the British were well-known, had been selected by the Darbar as its chief representative for negotiating the terms of peace.[1]

This "welcome ambassador" and his companions were then referred to Frederic Currie, the Chief Secretary to the Government, and Henry Lawrance, the Agent to the Governor-General, so that they could know from them the terms which the Governor-General had already broadly determined upon for their acceptance. All of them then retired for a discussion which went on for a long time at night.[2]

The British authorities proposed to levy a war indemnity of two crores of rupees on the Lahore Darbar and the annexation of the Doab territory to the British Indian Empire. But Gulab Singh protested that these were very harsh terms.[3] In order to impress on the British authorities that the Darbar did not deserve so severe a punishment, he gave them to understand that the war could still be carried on as the Khalsa power had not yet been completely crushed and his own forces stood in tact ; and that the best way to do so was "to leave the sturdy infantry entrenched and watched, and to sweep the open country with cavalry to the gates of Delhi."[4]

1. In the words of W.L.M' Gregor (p. 258), "there was no other influential person who could undertake the task with any prospect of success ; for the Sirdars were all more or less, implicated in the invasion ; whereas Gulab Singh had stood aloof throughout the contest. He was thus the only person connected with Lahore, that could be called to the aid of the Rani and her son, at a time when the safety of both, as well as the existence of the Lahore Government was at stake."
2. Governor-General to Secret Committee, 19 Feb. 1846—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, pp. 141-42 ; Hardinge to Wife, no date—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, p. 102 ; *Despatches and General Orders Announching the Victories Achieved by the Army of the Sutlej over the Sikh Army at Moodkee, Ferozeshah, Aliwal and Sobroan*, Rep. 1970, pp. 90-92.
3. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 316 ; Panikar, R.M., op. cit., p. 96.
4. Cunningham, J.D., op. cit., pp. 287-88.

Currie and Lawrence took the Raja aside, at this stage, for a private talk. They reminded him of the untold sufferings the Darbar had inflicted on him, his brothers, nephew and son ; and wondered at the devotion with which he was still pleading its case. They further told him that the Governor-General and promised to bestow upon him the hill territory of Kohistan afrer separating it from the Lahore kingdom, and exalt him by the title of Maharaja.

But Gulab Singh replied that if the Darbar had been uncheritable to his relatives, they were, after all, its subjects. In any case, he further said, the present Maharaja could not be held responsible for the misdeeds of his predecessors ; and as he was now representing the former, he must champion his cause faithfully.[5]

It may be pointed out here that on the very day Gulab Singh had left Lahore for negotiations with the Governor-General, i.e., February 13, Henry Lawrence had written him the following letter :

> Kind Raja Sahib and dear Friend :
>
> Receive my regards and let it be known to you that I want to say to you a word which will be to your utmost good. So I hope you may manage to hear it from me personally. Do this please, and do this without delay. I hope you will remember me with your friendly letter.[6]

What Lawrence wanted to convey to Gulab Singh personally was evidently the proposal now made to him, viz., his recognition as an independent ruler of the Kohistan territory. That this indeed was the intention of the Governor-General is clear also from the Proclamation which he issued on February 14, indicating the lines on which the peace settlement was to be made. After stating that the Government of India had no desire to annex the Panjab, the Proclamation said that it would "retain a portion of the Lahore territories, the extent of which would be determined by the conduct of the Darbar, and by considerations for the security of the British

5. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 316-17 ; Panikar, K.M.. op. cit. pp. 96-97.
6. Panikar, K.M., op. cit., p. 95 ; Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 310-11.

frontier."[7] "These words", Hardinge himself says, "were meant to include any arrangements which would render the hills independent of plains."[8]

In view of Gulab Singh's reply, however, the proposal was given up for the time being, and the official talks with all the representatives of the Darbar were resumed. The agreement which followed was put in black and white, and the chiefs undertook the responsibility for its execution without any delay.

The terms of the agreement included the recognition of Dalip Singh as the sovereign of Lahore ; surrender to the British in full sovereignty of all the territory, hill and plain, lying between the Sutlej and the Bias ; payment of one and a half crores of rupees as indemnity for the expenses of the war ; disbandment of the present Sikh army, and its reorganisation on the system and regulations with regard to pay which obtained in the time of Ranjit Singh ; fixation of the strength of the army to be henceforth maintained in consultation with the Government of India ; and surrender to it all the guns used in the war, the control and regulation of the banks of the Sutlej, and the right to settle the future boundaries of the Panjab and organise its administration.[9]

"One important lesson of the war", says Dr. S.S. Bal, "was that instead of playing the buffer between the English and the Afghans, it could itself turn against the British. The new State had, therefore, to be weakened in the British interest itself."[10] Hence, the above mentioned severe terms. These settled, Lord Hardinge proposed that the young Maharaja along with the chiefs staying at the capital, should come to tender his personal submission on February 18 at Luliani, about midway between the Sutlej and the Ravi, and then all of them would go to Lahore.[11]

7. Latif, S.M., op. cit., p. 549.
8. Hardinge to Ellenborough, 7 June 1846—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, p. 95.
9. Governor-General to Secret Committee, 19 Feb. 1846—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, pp. 142-43 ; *Despatches and General Orders*, op. cit., pp. 92-93.
10. Bal, S.S., op. cit., p. 78.
11. Governor-General to Secret Committee, 19 Feb. 1846—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, p. 143 : *Despatches and General Orders*, op. cit., p. 93.

The proposal of the Governor-General could not be opposed, but Gulab Singh was against any further advance of the British towards the capital. Hence, he tried to dissuade the former from going to Luliani. But Hardinge "refused to listen to any arrangement, which would prevent him from sealing under the walls of Lahore, any treaty, that might be made. *There* and there alone, must the indemnity be paid for the expense of the war, and there alone atonement must be made for blood split in the warfare brought on by a military force uncontrolled by its own government."

The Raja of Jammu then took to a ruse to gain his end. According to W.L. M'Gregor[12] and G.A. Henry[13], he himself hastened to Lahore, and brought Dalip Singh to Kasur. But the biographer of Gulab Singh says that the latter wrote to Rani Jindan to send her son immediately.[14] Lord Hardinge also states that the Raja sent urgent summons to Lahore, with the result that the young Maharaja and his chiefs arrived at Kasur on 17th, and the Governor-General was informed that they were ready to wait upon him at once. But Hardinge also was not a baby in the wood; he bluntly refused to alter his original schedule, and asked the Maharaja and his chiefs to see him as already arranged.

Left without any alternative, Dalip Singh was taken to Luliani where he tendered his submission on 18th, and begged pardon. Then and only then did the Governor-General treat him "as a Prince restored to the friendship of the British Government." The formalities over, Gulab Singh asked Hardinge if the Maharaja could return to Lahore or his presence was still needed at the British Camp. The Governor-General replied that it was his wish to personally conduct the Prince to his capital.[15]

Dalip Singh was accordingly brought to Lahore on February 20, and it was announced that the Governor-General had restored

12. M'Gregor, W.L., op. cit., II, pp. 201-03.
13. Henry, G.A., op. cit., p 173.
14. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 318.
15. Governor-General to Secret Committee, 19 Feb. 1846—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, pp. 143-44 : *Despatches and General Orders*, op. cit., pp. 93-95.

him to power out of consideration for the memory of late Ranjit Singh.[16] Gulab Singh continued to be his Wazir. But this fact was in conflict with the desires of Lal Singh. The latter, therefore, began to intrigue against Gulab Singh whose position, consequently, soon became uncomfortable.[17] A couple of unsuccessful attempts on the Raja's life also were made.[18] He then prepared to resign.[19] But the Rani struck first ; she sacked him, and restored Lal Singh to the Wazarat[20] on February 26.[21]

The treaty with the Lahore Darbar was, however, not finally ratified till March 9, by which time it had been found necessary to make some important modifications in the terms originally proposed. It was discovered that the the State could not pay more than a third of the stipulated war indemnity. An appeal to the chiefs was then made for contributions. According to W.L. M'Gregor, "some angry discussions in the Darbar were the natural consequence." Those who had amassed a fortune at the expense of the State said that already their property had been confiscated, while others spoke of their narrow circumstances.[22]

The Darbar then offered to cede to the British, as an equivalent for one crore, its hill territories between the Bias and the Sindh, including the provinces of Kashmir and Hazara.[23] As these

16. Allen, op. cit., p. 366 ; Latif, S.M., op. cit.. p. 552.
17. M'Gregor, W.L., op. cit., II, p. 208 ; Cunningham, J.D., op. cit., p. 287.
18. According to Gulab Singh himself, "on returning one day from Lawrence's tent, he went to a shrine in the city to perform his devotions, and on rising to mount his horse, the Faqir observed, 'it is not time yet. He then waited about a quarter of an hour and again proposed to go. The Faqir again stopped him ; but when half an hour elapsed, he was allowed to go. He afterwards found out that a party of men hired by Lal Singh had been told off to murder him ; and that these men, finding that he did not arrive at his house at the usual time, concluded he had gone round by some other street." (Hunter, W.W., *Viscount Hardinge*, 1900, pp. 138-39).
19. M'Gregor, W.L., op. cit., II, p. 208.
20. Satinder Singh, Bawa, op. cit., p. 117 ; Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 319, Panikar, K.M., op. cit., pp. 97-98.
21. Seetal, Sohan Singh, *How Fell the Sikh Kingdom*, 1970, p. 179.
22. M'Gregor, W.L., op. cit. II, p. 215.
23. Latif, S.M.. op. cit., p. 553.

territories included that of Jammu also, their cession meant the transfer of the possessions of Gulab Singh to the British. This was done intentionally at the suggestion of Lal Singh in order "to get a dreaded rival out of the way.[24]" According to K.M. Panikar, the Lahore Wazir's "idea was to deprive Gulab Singh of his territory and give the British the option either of holding Kashmir which would have been impossible at that time, or of accepting a reduced indemnity.[25]"

When Gulab Singh learnt of the latest turn of events, he felt highly upset and depressed. J.D. Cunningham says in his usual way that the Raja saw the Governor-General and "perplexed" him "by asking what he was to get for all he had done to bring about a speedy peace, and to render the army an easy prey." And Hardinge became eager to appease him because he knew that Raja had the capacity to prolong the war and the way he had pointed out at Kasur for fighting it out showed that he was an able strategist too. Therefore, "while negotiations were still pending and season advancing, it was desired to conciliate one who might render himself formidable in a day, by joining the remaining of the Sikh forces, and by opening his treasures and arsenals to a warlike population.[26]"

But according to his biographer, Gulab Singh sent Dewan Jawala Sahai to the British Camp "to represent that Jammu territory be granted as sustenance to his dependents and he should be permitted to retire to Benaras." The Dewan met Lawrence and Currie who, after discussing the whole matter with Hardinge, gave him the happy tidings that if the Raja paid the indemnity of one crore of rupees, the British would be willing to bestow on him the territories lying between the source of the Bias to the Sindh, including Kashmir and Hazara. Gulab Singh was, however, not in a position to pay such a heavy amount. He, therefore, suggested the exlcusion from the grant the territory lying to the right bank of the Bias and a corresponding reduction in the amount

24. Cunningham, J.D., op.cit., p. 288.
25. Panikar, K.M., op. cit., p. 98.
26. Cunnigham, J.D. op. cit., pp. 287-88

demanded.[27] This suggestion was accepted, rather welcomed by the British authorities. "It is highly expedient," wrote Hardinge to the Secret Committee, "that the trans-Beas portion of Kulu and Mandi with the more fertile district and strong position of Nurpur and the celebrated fort Kangra—the key of the Himalayas in native estimation—with its districts and its dependencies should be in our possession." And in consideration of the exclusion of this territory, the amount of indemnity to be paid by Gulab Singh was reduced by twenty-five Lakhs.[28]

Rani Jindan and Lal Singh had expected to put the Raja of Jammu in sore straits through their strategem. It was, however, through this very strategem that Gulab Singh now appeared to be gaining the most cherished desire of his life. "As you make your bed, so you must lie in it." But the Rani and her Wazir also were not prepared to admit their defeat so easily. They sent Dewan Dina Nath, Faqir Nur-ud-Din and Bhai Ram Singh to Henry Lawrence and Frederic Currie to dissuade them from implementing the proposed deal with Gulab Singh. If the Government of India did not gratify her wish, the deputation said, the Rani would go to London to file a complaint with Queen Victoria. But the Governor-General of India simply ignored this threat as it was the practical necessity and not any personal whim which had guided him in making the offer to Gulab Singh.[29]

The Lahore Darbar then again sent Dewan Dina Nath to the British authorities with a message that it would pay the whole indemnity in cash by raising contributions in the following manner—rupees forty-five lakhs from Dewan Sawan Mal, seventeen lakhs each from Gulab Singh, Misser Rallia Ram and Sheikh Imam-ud-Din, and three lakhs from Tek Ghand. "But the British insisted on their pound of flesh in the shape of the territory asserting that the Darbar had offered this. The British spokesman is reported to have put the matter coarsely, saying that it did not become the Darbar to wish to retain that which had been spewed up.[30]" The result was that the Treaty of Lahore

27. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 319–21.
28. Panikar, K.M., op. cit., pp. 115-16.
29. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., p. 321.
30. Sohan Lal Suri quoted by Kohli, Sita Ram, *Sunset*, pp. 119-20.

signed on March 9, 1846, between the British and the Darbar had the following two Articles also :

Article 4 : The British Government having demanded from the Lahore State, as indemnification for the expenses of the war, in addition to the cession of territory described in Article 3, payment of one and a half crores of rupees ; and the Lahore Government being unable to pay the whole of this sum at this time, or to give security satisfactory to the British Government for its eventual payment ; the Maharaja cedes to the Honourable Company, in perpetual sovereignty, as equivalent for one crore of rupees, all his forts, territories, rights, and interests, in the hill countries which are situated between the rivers Beas and Indus, including the provinces of Kashmir and Hazara.

Article 12. In consideration of the services rendered by Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu to the Lahore State, towards procuring the restoration of the relations of amity between the Lahore and British Governments, the Maharaja hereby agrees to recognize the independent sovereignty of Raja Gulab Singh, in such territories and districts in the hills as may be made over to the said Raja Gulab Singh by separate agreement between himself and the British Government, with the dependencies, thereof, which may have been in the Raja's possession since the time of the late Maharaja Kharak Singh ; and the British Government, in consideration of the good conduct of Raja Gulab Singh, also agrees to recognise his independence in such territories, and admit him to the privileges of a separate treaty with the British Government.[31]

Six days later, on March 15, the Camp of the Governor-General reached Amritsar where Raja Gulab Singh was formally invested with the title of Maharaja. The grateful Dogra chief then stood up with folded hands, and said that he regarded himself as the Governor-General's "*Zarkharid*, or gold-bought slave.[32]" On March 16 the separate treaty as envisaged under Article 12 of the Treaty of Lahore was also concluded with him at Amritsar. Known as the Treaty of Amritsar,[33] it said that

31. Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Relations*, pp. 381-82.
32. Latif, S.M., op. cit., p. 554.
33. For. Sec. 26 Dec. 1846, Nos. 442-43 : For. Sec.. 4 Mar. 1846, No. 7. For full text of the Treaty, see Appendix II.

The British Government transfers and makes over, for ever, in independent possession, to Maharaja Gulab Singh and heirs male of his body, all the hilly or mountainous country, with its dependencies situated to the Eastward of the river Indus and Westward of the river Ravi, including Chamba and excluding Lahol, being part of the territories ceded to the British Government by the Lahore State according to the provisions of Article IV of the Treaty of Lahore dated 9th March, 1846 A.D.

In consideration of the transfer made to him and his heirs by the provisions of the foregoing Articles, Maharaja Gulab Singh will pay to the British Government the sum of seventy-five lakhs of rupees (Nanakshahi), fifty lakhs to be paid on ratification of this Treaty and twenty-five lakhs on or before the Ist October of the current year, 1846 A.D.

Maharaja Gulab Singh acknowledges the supremacy of the British Government and will in token of such supremacy present annually to the British Government one horse, twelve perfect shawl goats of approved breed (six male and six female) and three pairs of Kashmiri shawls.

For want of ready money, the payment of seventy-five lakhs of rupees by Gulab Singh was, however, delayed. Suchet Singh's treasure worth about rupees fifteen lakhs was still in the custody of the British. Gulab Singh was recognised his late brother's heir, and the latter's treasure was immediately treated as having been received from the former on account of the payment due from him.[34] The balance of the amount was paid in a number of instalments, the last one having been made on March 14, 1850.[35]

A very vital consideration which weighed with the British authorities for slicing away the above mentioned territories from

34. Kirpa Ram, op. cit., pp. 320-21; Panikar, K.M., op. cit., pp. 116-17.
35. The original receipt dated March 30, 1850, issued by the Panjab Board of Administration for the final and full payment of seventy-five lakhs of rupees made by Gulab Singh is lying with the Panjab Record Office Museum, Lahore (Pakistan), and a copy of it has been reproduced in the Panjab Govt. Monograph No. 16, *Trial of Raja Lal Singh*, edited by R.R. Sethi, first printed in 1932, reprinted in 1971, Patiala, Appendix III. See also Sapru, A.N., *The Building of the Jammu and Kashmir State*, Lahore, 1931, Appendix VI; Satinder Singh, Bawa, op. cit., Appendix C, p. 192.
We also reproduce the copy of the receipt at the end—Appendix III.

the Lahore Darbar was, as pointed out before, their desire to weaken the Sikh buffer State, and the new Rajput hill State was formed as a counterpoise to it. The further intention of the British was to use both of these States to defend the Afghan frontier. That this could be done was first indicated by Ripon, the President of the Board of Control in the British Cabinet of Robert Peel.

After the murder of Hira Singh in May 1844, as already noted, Lord Hardinge had apprehended the emergence of an independent hill State under Gulab Singh, and its subsequent conflict with the Sikh State of Lahore, leading to the ultimate dissolution of the latter to the advantange of the Muslim territories of Kashmir, Multan and the Trans-Indus region. If the Lahore kingdom was actually threatened with dissolution, Hardinge's suggestion was that it should be occupied by the British.[36] But Ripon had differed with his views. The opinion of the former was that instead of posing any threat, an independent Rajput State could be made to help defend the frontier against the Afghans. As its emergence was likely to be the result of the antipathy towards the Sikhs, this State would look to the British for guidance. With the existence of a Rajput State as a counter-balance, the Sikhs also would be friendly to the British. Both under the British advice, had argued Ripon, could easily be made to defend the Afghan frontier.[37]

Hardinge had this opinion of Ripon in his mind when, after the battle of Sobroan, he prepared himself to negotiate the terms of peace. He wrote to his wife on or about February 17, 1846 :

> The Maharaja or the king is to come into my Camp tomorrow to submit himself to my generosity...I take from them a fertile district which improves our frontier, 1½ million of money, and as they have shown themselves too strong I hope to take away Cashmere and the hill districts declaring them independent of Lahore.[38]

To Queen Victoria also he wrote on February 18 :

> The Governor-General hopes to be able before the negotiations are closed to make arrangements by which Kashmir may be

36. Supra, 203-04.
37. See Bal, S,S., op. cit., pp. 63-64.
38. Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, pp. 102-03.
also Ibid.. p. 92-Hardinge to Ellenborough, 19 Feb. 1846.

added to the possessions of Gulab Singh. declaring the Rajput Hill States with Kashmir independent of the Sikhs of the Plains.[39]

When, however, the time for the actual settlement of the terms arrived, Hardinge refrained from asking the cession of Kashmir for the fear of looking very severe.[40] But later the Lahore Darbar itself offered to cede the whole territory lying between the Bias and the Sindh. The task of the Governor-General was thus simplified ; he could then make Jammu under Gulab Singh independent and also add Kashmir as well as Hazara to it. The frontier of the new hill State was thus brought right up to the Trans-Indus districts of the Lahore kingdom, and its Maharaja was thereby enabled to play a very effective role in defending the Afghan frontier in collaboration with the Sikh State. That this was indeed Hardinge's main consideration for the creation of the Jammu and Kashmir State is established beyond doubt by his despatch of March 19, 1846, to the Secret Committee. He wrote :

> I request your Honourable Committee's attention to the treaty made with the Maharaja Gulab Singh, by which a Rajput principality of the hill districts has been constructed extending from the Ravi to the Indus, and including the province of Kashmir. The Maharaja is declared by the treaty independent of the Lahore State and under the protection of the British Government. As it was of the utmost importance to weaken the Sikh nation before its government could be re-established, I considered the appropriation of this part of the ceded territory to be the most expedient measure I could devise for that purpose, by which a Rajput dynasty will act as a counterpoise against the power of a Sikh prince, the son of the late Ranjit Singh, and, both will have a common interest in resisting attempts on the part of any Muhammadan power to establish an independent State on this side of the Indus, or even to occupy Peshawar.[41]

"A master stroke of policy—killing two birds with one stone, the Sikh power weakened, in the event of any further rising, and a friendly, subordinate power established on the most important

39. Younghusband, Sir Francis, *Kashmir*, 1909, pp. 171-72.
40. Bal, S S., op. cit., p. 80.
41. For. Sec. Despatch No. 8, Mar. 19, 1846; See also Hardinge to Ripon. 18 Mar. 1846—Bal. S.S. op. cit., p. 64.

frontier of the Empire." This is how Maud Diver estimates the importance of Hardinge's arrangements.[42]

The neutrality of Gulab Singh in the Anglo-Sikh War was yet another consideration for rewarding him with independence and additions of territory. This fact the Governor-General himself explained to Ellenborough in a letter dated 7th June, 1846. Gulab Singh, he wrote, was never the Minister of the Panjab for the administration of its affairs. This post was offered to him repeatedly, but he declined to accept it. When the war broke out, he tendered his allegiance to the British on the condition of being confirmed in his possessions. "This was neither conceded nor refused......I merely referred him to the terms of the Proclamation of December, when the Sikhs crossed the Sutlej. Nevertheless, it was clearly to be understood by the terms of that Proclamation that, if Gulab Singh took no part against us, he was entitled to consideration whenever the affairs of the Panjab came to be settled... During the whole campaign he had purposely kept himself aloof; not a single hill soldier had fired a shot against us, so that the Government had every right to treat with him." But, Hardinge continued, the Government of India "had their own interests, also to attend to; which in policy required that the Sikh State should be weakened and that the Hills should be separated from the plains."[43]

The "additional consideration" of neutrality also was thus "in the sense of a confirmation of the belief that Gulab Singh would play the role intended for him and that he would follow British advice in defending the Afghan frontier."[44]

The critics of Hardinge, including Ellenborough, had, however, described his deal with Gulab Singh as an attempt to bribe a minister of the Lahore Darbar, and, therefore, "unworthy of British name."[45] In his letter of June 7, the Governor General

42. Diver, Maud, *Royal India*, 1943, p. 251.
43. Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, pp. 94-95.
44. Bal, S.S., op. cit,, pp. 80-81.
45. Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Relations*, pp. 288-89.
The transfer of Kashmir to Gulab Singh was regretted also by a number of Britishers after the Panjab was annexed to the British Indian Empire consequent of the Second Anglo-Sikh War of 1948-49. For details see author's *Kashmir Sold and Snatched*, 1968, pp. 9-16.

replied to this charge also. "Were we to be deterred from doing what was right," he asked Ellenborough, "and what had been previously determined upon, because the Lahore Darbar, knowing he (Gulab Singh) had not participated in their crimes, chose to employ him for a particular object as being the man most acceptable to us?" Referring then to the pressing calls sent by the Lahore Darbar to Gulab Singh to come to the capital, the Governor-General said that the Raja ultimately arrived, "protesting publicly in the Darbar against all that had been done," and accepted the responsibility of attempting a settlement only after receiving a **carte blanche**. Even then he did not alone negotiate with the British; four other Lahore Commissioners were also associated with him. "He had been told by Major Lawrence on the 3rd of February in a written document," went on Hardinge, "that we appreciated his wisdom in not having taken up arms against us, and that his interests would be taken into consideration. The words of the Proclamation dated 14th of February, were these : 'The extent of the territory which it may be advisable to take will be determined by the conduct of the Darbar and by considerations for the security of the British frontier.'

"The words were meant to include any arrangements which would render the hills independent of the plains, which arrangement had been well considered before the battle of Sobroan. It was always intended that Gulab Singh, whose troops had not fired a shot, should have his case and position fully considered.

"I wrote to Ripon on 16 February that the encouragement of Gulab Singh would weaken this warlike republic as regards territory of hills and plains could be separated. What act of treason, then, had he committed against the Lahore State ? He had done good service to us, which we had recognised before he was a Sikh Commissioner. After the war commenced, were we to abandon our policy and to treat the only man who had not lifted up his arm against us with indifference because he came to headquarters specially deputed by the Lahore Darbar to confer with us as one who had not joined in their unprovoked invasion ? His forbearance was rewarded, because this forbearance was in accordance with an

intended policy, and because the charge of treason could not be substantiated.'[46]

It may further be argued that once the British had decided to take away Kashmir from the Lahore Darbar, they had no choice but to transfer it to Gulab Singh. Without first occupying the Panjab, they themselves could not hold Kashmir. Writing to a near relative, Hardinge pointed out :

> It was necessary last March to weaken the Sikhs by depriving them of Kashmir. The distance from Kashmir to the Sutlej is 300 miles of very difficult mountainous country quite impracticable for six months. To keep a British force 300 miles from any possibility of support would have been an undertaking that merited strait-waiscoat and not a peerage. The arrangement made was the only alternative.[47]

Even if the British had decided to ignore this geographical difficulty, the retention of Kashmir would have created many other serious problems for them. Referring to them in his letter of March 4, 1846, the Governor-General said :

> It would bring us into collision with many powerful chiefs, for whose coercion a large military establishment at a great distance from our provinces and military resources would be necessary. It would more than double the extent of our present frontier in countries assailable at every point, and most difficult to defend without any corresponding advantages for such large additions of territory. Now, distant and conflicting interests would be created and races of people, with whom we have hitherto had no intercourse, would be brought under our rule, while the territories, excepting Kashmir, are comparatively unproductive, and would scarcely pay the expenses of occupation and management.[48]

If, then, Kashmir was not to be or could not be held by the British themselves, it had to be handed over to a Hindu, and neither to a Muslim nor to a Sikh, in the interest of defence, as already made clear ; and among all the contemporary Hindu chiefs of this whole hill region there was none who was fit to hold a candle to Gulab Singh in ability, energy and power. That under the

46. Hardinge to Ellenborough, 7 June, 1846—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, pp. 95-96.
47. See Panikar, K.M., op. cit., pp. 106-07.
48. For. Sec. Despatch No. 7, March 4, 1846.

circumstances his elevation was the Hobson's choice with the British is not difficult to comprehend from the following angry outbursts of Hardinge :

> The man, whom I have to deal with Gulab Singh, is the greatest rascal in Asia. Unfortunately, it is necessary to improve his condition because he did not participate in war against us and his territory touches ours. We can protect him without inconvenience and give him a slice of the Sikh territory which balances his strength in the same degree against theirs ; and as he is geographically our ally, I must forget he is a rascal and treat him better than he deserves.[49]

The actual possession of Kashmir by Maharaja Gulab Singh was, however, not obtained without much difficulty. An attempt was made to contest his newly acquired sovereignty over it by Sheikh Imam-ud-Din, son of Sheikh Mohi-ud-Din and the Sikh Governor of Kashmir. The latter organised an insurrection, and all the hill chiefs also made a common cause with him. Gulab Singh tried to take the insurgents by storm but failed ; and before making another attempt, he applied for the British assistance. The British held the Lahore Darbar responsible for the gross violation of the treaty by one of its own servants, and demanded that it should place sufficient force at the Maharaja's disposal for the eviction of the rebel governor. Lal Singh was thus forced to despatch a force which advanced towards Kashmir along with Gulab Singh and his men. A large body of the British troops, under Brig. Wheeler also left Jullundur to occupy Jammu in order to afford the Maharaja a point *d'appui* in case of a second reverse and also to manifest the British determination to uphold Gulab Singh's authority.

The demonstration of the British intention had the desired effect, and soon after Sheikh Imam-ud-Din conveyed to Henry Lawrence, who also was accompanying Gulab Singh, that he was acting under the written orders of Lal Singh, the Lahore Wazir.

49. Hardinge to Wife, 2 March 1846—Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Papers*, p. 104.

The British Agent then informed the Sheikh that if he surrendered and proved what he had said, no harm would befall him. The latter jumped at this assurance and submitted, and Gulab Singh entered Srinagar on November 9, 1846, without any opposition.

Later, a public enquiry was made into the affair of Imam-ud-Din when it was established that Lal Singh had secretly instigated him to oppose the occupation of Kashmir by Gulab Singh. The Lahore Wazir was then deposed, and removed across the Sutlej.[50]

With the acquisition of Kashmir, its dependencies, including Gilgit and the Indus Valley to Chilas, also passed into the hands of Maharaja Gulab Singh.

But within a year there occurred some changes in the boundaries of this newly formed State of Jammu and Kashmir. By the treaty of March 9, 1846, Chamba had been included in the possession of Gulab Singh. But the Treaty had also laid down that the Ravi was to be his boundary on the west. As this river divided Chamba into two parts, the question arose whether the whole of this State or only the portion to the west of the Ravi belonged to Gulab Singh. The Chamba ruler's claim over Bhadarwah, which had been bestowed upon him as a jagir by Ranjit Singh, further complicated the matter. It was, however, ultimately settled by Henry Lawrence's arbitration that Bhadarwah along with Lakhanpur and Chandgraon should go to Gulab Singh and the whole of Chamba should form a separate State under the British control.

There was a change on the side of Indus also. At the time of its transfer to Gulab Singh, Hazara was in revolt. Failing to pacify it, he approached the British authorities with a request to exchange it for some other territory near Jammu. The result was the restoration of Hazara to the Lahore Darbar and grant of Manawar and Garhi to Gulab Singh. The boundary of the Maharaja's State between Muzaffarabad and the town of Jehlum then became the Jehlum river.

50. Annual Register, Govt. of India, 1846, pp. 365-72 ; Panikar, K.M., *op. cit.*, pp. 117-19 ; Hasrat, Bikramajit, *Relations*, pp. 294-95.

In 1847, the chiefs of Rajouri, Bhimbar, Poonch, Jasrota, Mankot, Ramnagar, Basohli and Kishtwar were pensioned off whereafter they took up their abode in the British territories. The total amount of their annual pension came to about rupees sixty-two thousand. Gulab Singh agreed to surrender the district of Sujanpur and a part of Pathankot in lieu of this amount.

The boundary between Kashmir and Tibet also was settled soon after.

Thus came into existence the Jammu and Kashmir State in its present shape.

Conclusion

It was across a gulf of years that the Panjab came to have a government of its own under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. His kingdom included Multan, Peshawar, Kashmir and Jammu. The British rule in India also extended towards the Sutlej which them came to form the boundary between the territories of the two governments.

As long as the Maharaja lived, he tried to maintain good neighbourly relations with the British. Sometimes differences did arise between them, but Ranjit Singh bent his knees when he saw that these could not be settled peacefully. The British also never gave him offence for small things, because their policy was to use his kingdom as a buffer between their Indian Empire and the Afghans.

After the great Maharaja ended his days in 1839, the circumstances began to change rapidly. In the first place, he left no worthy successor with the exception of Nau Nihal Singh. When he also died soon after, none remained to keep the kingdom intact. In the absence of a competent ruler, much depended on his advisers and courtiers. But the chiefs also of the Lahore Dardar did not rise to the occasion. Being selfish, they came to be split in a number of groups or parties and each worked and intrigued against the other, throwing all norms to the winds.

The Dogra brothers of Jammu formed one of the parties. They were Gulab Singh, Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh. Starting their

career as ordinary soldiers under Ranjit Singh, they gradually rose to the highest positions in the State. In lieu of their signal services, all of them were created Rajas. While Dhian Singh came to serve primarily as an administrator and rose to become the chief minister or Wazir, Gulab Singh played an eminent role in extending the boundaries of the Maharaja's kingdom, and his reward was the Raj of Jammu in 1822. Gulab Singh was further authorised to enlarge his boundaries, but he had to inform the Maharaja whenever this happened. Making good use of this authority, the former carried his arms up to Ladakh. Yet another privilege which the former came to enjoy was examption from a regular attendance on the Maharaja. No wonder, the Dogra brothers became the foremost chiefs of the Lahore Darbar.

But this phenomenal rise of the Dogras activated the green-eyed monster in many of the chiefs of the Darbar, who became their enemies. After the death of their patron, intrigues were, therefore, set on foot to dislodge the Dogras from power and position. But their rivals had no able and competent leader, with the result that every intrigue of the former was met with a successful counter-intrigue of the latter. This state of affairs went on unabated for a pretty long time ; neither did the Dogras submit to the dominance and dictation of the men who were much inferior in talent and ability, nor did their rivals show any willingness to work under their leadership. The result was a series of murders, and Chet Singh, Maharaja Sher Singh, Dhian Singh, Suchet Singh, Hira Singh and Princes Kashmira Singh and Peshora Singh were prominent among those who lost their lives.

In the time of Maharaja Sher Singh another contender for power also entered the arena. The Khalsa army began to defy all authority, and not long after all traces of an orderly government disappeared from the land.

Yet another significant development during this period was the estrangement between the Lahore Darbar and Gulab Singh, which tended to separate the hill territories of the latter from the main unit. After the death of Hira Singh, who had replaced his father, Dhian Singh, as the Lahore Wazir, the Darbar even despatched an army against the Raja of Jammu. But the only result of this

invasion was that the gulf between the two was further widened, and Jammu was almost completely hedged off from the Panjab.

For his safety and protection, Gulab Singh then turned to the British. Overtures to the British by the successors of Ranjit Singh and their chiefs had by now become almost a routine matter. But those of Gulab Singh were not responded favourably.

Dalip Singh, a boy, was now the Maharaja, and his mother, Rani Jindan, was the Regent. Sardar Jawahar Singh became the Wazir after Hira Singh's murder. But the former also incurred the wrath of the army, and was, put to death. The Rani and her supporters then decided to get rid of this ungovernable army by inciting it to wage a war against the British, and the result was the First Anglo-Sikh War.

The army wanted Gulab Singh to lead them in the war, but he refused to do so. In the first instance, he was opposed to a war with the British. Secondly, as he and many of his near and dear ones had suffered tremendously at the hands of the Darbar as well the army, he was not willing also to support the Khalsa. Thirdly, he was forbidden by the Rani to leave Jammu for Lahore without her prior permission.

Ultimately, Gulab Singh was summoned to Lahore when the Sikh army had fought and lost three battles, and practically nothing but settlement of the peace terms remained to be done. Before any settlement could, however, be reached, one more battle was fought and again lost by the Lahore army.

There were two considerations before the British for determining the peace terms. First, they wanted to dip the wings of the Lahore Darbar so that it could not again challenge their might. Secondly, an arrangement had to be made by which the north-west frontier could be defended against the Afghans. Earlier, the Panjab had been acting as a useful buffer State between the Afghans and the British. But now it had turned against the British themselves. Hence, it could not be depended upon for the future.

The solution evolved was to grant severe terms to the Lahore Darbar. Some territory also was taken away from the Darbar, out

of which was created a new State on the north-west frontier so that it should act as a counterpoise to the already weakened kingdom of Lahore, and both of them should look to the British for guidance and protection. The new State which thus came into existence was that of Jammu and Kashmir under Gulab Singh. There was no alternative to it. In the whole of the frontier region, there was no chief other than he who could satisfy the British requirements.

It may be inferred from the above facts that had there been no war between the Lahore Darbar and the British, and had the former continued to act as a useful buffer State, there would have been no modern State of Jammu and Kashmir. After his estrangement with the Darbar, Gulab Singh no doubt wanted to become independent but only in his hill possessions of Jammu; and this also he might have or might not have achieved. Even after the conclusion of the war, had the Darbar not ceded to the British the territory in lieu of the indemnity of one crore of rupees, the Jammu and Kashmir State might still have not come into being. The mistaken policy of the Lahore Darbar alone was thus responsible for the birth of this State.

In discussing the causes of the Sikh defeat in the war, many historians have, however, made much of the alleged treacherous role of Gulab Singh. But our researches show that treachery was practised mainly by Rani Jindan, Lal Singh and Tej Singh. Gulab Singh had been openly and persistently voicing his opposition to the war, and favouring the continuance of Ranjit Singh's policy of friendship towards the British. Even when he was made the Lahore Wazir just before the last battle of Sobroan was fought, he made it abundantly clear to all that his inclination was towards peace. What is more important is the fact that he accepted this office on the express condition that it would be he and only he who would be competent to decide whether to continue the war or conclude peace, and that his decision would be binding on all. The Rani, the chiefs and the army Panchas had agreed to Gulab Singh's condition in writing also. But when he opted for peace, the army refused to fall in with him. So open and so fair was the conduct of Gulab Singh even at this stage that he asked the war mongers to select another leader if they were opposed to his policy.

In no way can Gulab Singh be held responsible for the defeat also of the Sikhs. Up to the time of the third battle of the war, he was debarred from participating in it by the Rani herself. Had he acted to the contrary, he would have been guilty of flouting the orders of the head of the State. After the third battle, he came to Lahore not to fight but to end fighting which had been caused by the intrigues of the Rani and her supporters, and which he honestly believed was not in the interest of the people of the Panjab. Still, if his neutrality is considered to have led to the Sikh defeat at Sobroan, his responsibility was obviously indirect. It was very small also, for if the success or defeat of the Lahore army largely depended on the active participation of Gulab Singh, they would not and should not have declared the war without first securing his consent.

Appendices

APPENDIX I

LISTS OF JAGIRS HELD BY THE JAMMU RAJAS

A. The list given by J.D. Cunningham (op. cit., p. 385)

Hill Jagirs of the Jammu Rajas.	*Rupees*
Jasrota, etc. Hira Singh.	1,25,000
Pader, and other Districts of Chamba. Gulab Singh	1,00,000
Bhadarwa, Gulab Singh	50,000
Mankot. Suchet Singh.	50,000
Bhaddu. Suchet Singh.	50,000
Bandralta. Suchet Singh.	1,25,000
Chanini (Ramnagar). Gulab Singh.	30,000
Jammu and Riasi. Gulab Singh	4,00,000
Samba. Suchet Singh.	40,000
Kishtwar. Gulab Singh.	1,50,000
Akhnur, including Chakkana, with Kesri Singh's family. Gulab Singh	50,000
Bhimbar. Dhian Singh.	1,50,000
The Chibh-Bhau tribes. Dhian Singh.	1,00,000
Kotli. Dhian Singh.	30,000
Sunach. Dhian Singh.	70,000
Dangli, Khanpur. Gulab Singh.	1,00,000
	16,20,000

Jagirs

Various Jagirs held by the Jammu Rajas (in the plains)	5,00,000
	5,00,000

B. The list given by Shahamat Ali (op. cit., pp. 103-06)

Raja Golab Singh's Jagirs

Jammu and fort of Kilas	92,225	Sad Garh	7,520
Province	83,391	Ram Garh	17,187
Purmandil	15,392	Ogarun	37,625
Bulwia Charia	26,879	Bahree	10,302
Pooma	17,556	Bhimber	2,687
Anderwah	92,145	Dehra Baba Nanak	637
Yahdial	8,116	Lala Chobarah	27,019
Rihasi	57,262	Arz Garh	6,225
Hartal	7,512	Deo Lasia	13,280
Seocheit Garh	5,675	Chetor Garh	6,980
Akhnur	29,719	Chini	9,667
Kishtwar	120,595		
Khera	7,553	Total Rs.	7,37,287
Kermachi	12,930		
Badharwal	23,190		

Jaghirs held by Raja Dhian Singh

	Rs. As. P.		Rs. As. P.
Jhapal	10,972-0-0	Islambad	4,181-12-0
Kotli	3,980-0-0	Hira Garh	11,511-0-0
Mangla Deo	28,681,14-0	Pattan	4,233-0-0
Panadar	16,881-0-0	Mandahar	22,853-0-0
Noshehrah	15,304-7-9	Golab Garh	23,106-0-3
Khoma	11,892-11-3	Beaupas	8,825-0-0
Walabal	15,652-0-0	Emnabad	4,375-0-0
Aman Garh	18,923-1-0	Mindki	3,505-0-0
Jaghir Shahbaz	9,965-1-0	Euosuf Garh	3,00-0
Hawali	20,852-0-0	Ramesir	13,100-0-0
Mondi	28,281-15-0	Azizpore	1,000-0-0
Sobun	21,442-2-0	Narangpore	600-0-0
Bhairam Girda	3,768-3-0	Makanpore	1,800-0-0
Tat Ders	4,751-6-6		
Poneh	7,642-8-0	Total Rs.	291,112-12-9
Pargana	69,729-0-0		

Jaghirs of Raja Sochet Singh

Bandralta	84,000	Sandri Kot	7,100
Janganu	11,050	Samba	27,200
Mankot	22,100	Samrath	12,250
Phidoo	12,215	Seocheit Garh	7,650
Adhar Sabar	6,100	Atal Garh	16,050
Khok	3,025	Manajeke	11,100
Darekdul Kala	3,035	Dera Din Puneh	27,500

Villages in the neighbourhood of Lahore	6,900	Kot Kana	2,300
Nao Shehra	6,140	Pholalwalah	27,000
Kotli Sarae	9,100	Total Rs.	3,06,865
Villages in the neighbourhood of Amritsar	5,050		

Jaghirs of Hira Singh

Chapral	119,250	Villages in the neighbourhood of Lahore	4,467
Zahura	6,877	Kala Khatae	5,822
Chittore	14,253	Mosumba Mamla	40,000
Hambur	16,992	Hagah Jasrota	153,510
Mirowal	8,760		
Kaleta	92,184	Total Rs.	4,62,115

(C) The List given by Richmond (op. cit., ff. 21-24)

Free grants

To Rajah Dhian Singh

Billawar	2,50,000
Bhimbhir & Poonch	2,00,000
Rajjouree	1,00,000
	5,50,000

To Raja Goolaub Singh

Jammoo & Makoo	3,00,000
Bhotee	25,000
Cheinee	15,000
	3,40,000

To Raja Sucheit Singh

Bundralta called Ramnugur	1,50,000
Bhuddoo	60,000
	2,10,000

To Raja Heera Singh

Jusrautah	2,00,000

To Raee Kesree Singh

Mankote	30,000
Total free grants	13,30,000

Grants in "Jageer"

In the Manjha or between the Ravee & Beas and other Districts

To Raja Dhian Singh

Bhyseen	10,000
Doogayach	4,000
Looh Roodhur &c	7,000
Kanee Khullree	7,000
Meerawal	20,000
Eimanabad	12,000
Mutteewal	25,000
Dholun Shumeer	15,000
A fort near Quliapore	2,000
Bookunwal, Jeewundah, Maree, Pukhllee, Machee & other places	22,000
	1,24,000

Grants in Jageer

To Raja Gulab Singh

Beiwal	25,000
Ghata	15,000
Bhurwalla	20,000
Hafizabad	60,000
Deiwa Bhuttala	40,000
Mounawur	40,000
Gudhee Peeran & Meerpore Chotung	85,000

Mungladevi	15,000
Chukhowal	60,000
	3,60,000
To Raja Soucheit Singh	
Deera Deenpunnah	25,000
Soucheit garh	15,000
Byjouree	3,000
	43,000
To Raja Heera Singh	
Teijlee	15,000
To Raee Kheisree Singh	
Atulgarh	16,000
Heinswal	2,500
Jeithallee	1,000
Boorj Khunnah	1,500
	21,000
To Meean Labh Singh	
Julleetah	7,000
Mundhalla	1,500
	8,500
Total grants in Jageer	5,71,500
Farmed	
To Raja Dhian Singh	none

To Raja Goolaub Singh	
Pind Dadun Khan, Goojrat, Bheira, Khooshaub, The Salt Mines and territory on the other side of the Chenab to the Bank of the Indus	36,00,000
The Jurran district formerly possessed by Beidee Saheb Singh	1,00, 000
To Raja Socheit Singh	
Vizeerabad &c	8,00,000
To Raee Keisree Singh	
Khanawalla district	12,500
Total farms	45,12,500
Countries governed by Raja Goolaub Singh for the Lahore Government.	
*Luddakh	7,00,000
Juskur	2,00,000

Total Revenues of Grants, Jageers, Farms & c in the hands of the Jummoo Rajas 73,14,000

*Laddakh yields about 7 lakhs of Rupees per annum, though its revenues have been represented to the Lahore Government to around only to 1,25,000 Rs.

APPENDIX II

Treaty between the British Government on the one part and Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu on the other concluded on the part of the British Government by Frederick Currie, Esquire, and Brevet-Major Henry Montgomery Lawrence, acting under the orders of the Right Honourable Sir Henry Hardinge, G.C.B., one of Her Britannic Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, Governor-General of the possessions of the East India Company,

to direct and control all their affairs in the East Indies and by Maharaja Gulab Singh in person.

ARTICLE I

The British Government transfers and makes over, for ever, in independent possession, to Maharaja Gulab Singh and heirs male of his body, all the hilly or mountainous country, with its dependencies situated to the Eastward of the river Indus and Westward of the river Ravi, including Chamba and excluding Lahol, being part of the territories ceded to the British Government by the Lahore State according to the provisions of Article IV of the Treaty of Lahore dated 9th March, 1846 A.D.

ARTICLE II

The Eastern boundary of the tract transferred by the foregoing Article to Maharaja Gulab Singh shall be laid down by Commissioners appointed by the British Government and Maharaja Gulab Singh respectively for that purpose and shall be defined in a separate engagement after survey.

ARTICLE III

In consideration of the transfer made to him and his heirs by the provisions of the foregoing Articles, Maharaja Gulab Singh will pay to the British Goverment the sum of seventy-five lakhs of rupees (Nanakshahi), fifty lakhs to be paid on ratification of this Treaty and twenty-five lakhs on or before the Ist October of the current year, 1846 A.D.

ARTICLE IV

The limits of the territories of Maharaja Gulab Singh shall not be at any time changed without the concurrence of the British Government.

ARTICLE V

Maharaja Gulab Singh will refer to the Arbitration of the British Government any disputes or questions that may arise between himself and the Government of Lahore or any other neighbouring State and will abide by the decision of the British Government.

ARTICLE VI

Maharaja Gulab Singh engages for himself and his heirs to join with the whole of his military forces, the British troops when employed in the hills or in the territories adjoining his possessions.

ARTICLE VII

Maharaja Gulab Singh engages never to take or retain in his

service any British subject nor the subject of any European or American State without the consent of the British Government.

ARTICLE VIII

Maharaja Gulab Singh engages to respect, in regard to the territory transferred to him, the provisions of the Articles, V, VI, and VII of the separate engagement between the British Government and the Lahore Darbar, dated 11th March, 1846 A. D.

ARTICLE IX

The British Government will give its aid to Maharaja Gulab Singh in protecting his territories from external enemies.

ARTICLE X

Maharaja Gulab Singh acknowledges the supremacy of the British Government and will in token of such supremacy present annually to the British Government one horse, twelve perfect shawl goats of approved breed (six male and six female) and three pairs of Kashmiri shawls.

This Treaty consisting of the above Articles has been this day settled by Frederic Currie Esq. and Brevet-Major Henry Montgomery Lawrence,acting under the directions of the Right Honourable Sir Henry Hardinge, G.C.B., Governor-General, on the part of the British Government, and by Maharaja Gulab Singh in person and the said Treaty has been this day ratified by the seal of the Right Honourable Sir Henry Hardinge, G.C.B., Governor-General.

Done at Amritsar this sixteenth day of March in the year of our Lord, 1846, corresponding with the seventeenth day Rabi-ul-Awwal 1264 Hijri.

(Signed) H. Hardinge (Seal)

Maharaja Gulab Singh
(Signed) F. Currie
(Signed) H.M. Lawrence.

By order of the Right Honourable
the Government of India
(Signed) F. Currie.
Secretary to the Government of India
with the Governor-General.

APPENDIX III

Copy of the Final Receipt for the purchase of Kashmir, dated Lahore, the 30th March 1850, signed by the Board of Administration.

The Honourable the East India Company having received from His Highness the Maharaja Gulab Singh the sum of Rs. 75,00,000 (seventy-five lakhs) in payment of the amount guaranteed by the III Article of the Treaty between the Hon'ble Company and His Highness, dated Amritsar, the 16th March 1846. The single acknowledgement of the receipt of the whole amount is granted by the Board of Administration for the affairs of the Panjab, at the request of Diwan Jawala Sahai, in addition to the receipts already given to His Highness' agents by the receiving officers, for the instalments received by them from time to time between the date of the Treaty and the 14th March 1850, the day on which the last instalment was paid into the Lahore Treasury.

(*Panjab Government Record Office Museum*)

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